



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

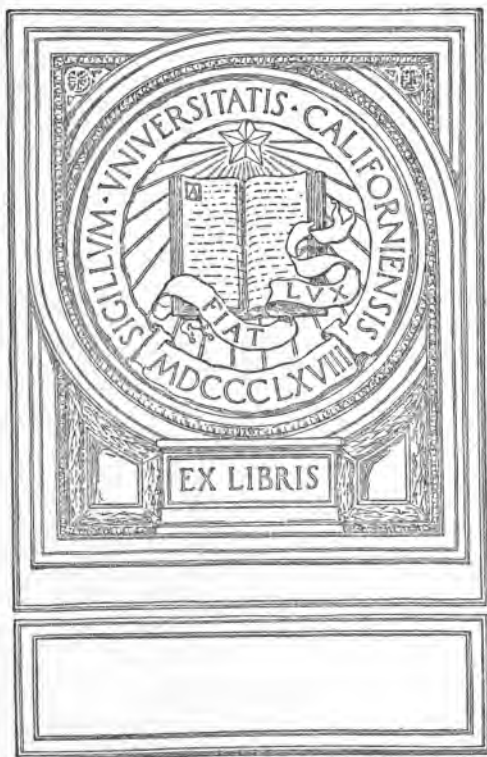
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>













2 10-2

1221  
4.00

*THE TRAGEDIES OF*  
**ÆSCHYLOS**

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

α





*Lois T. C. Howison,  
Oct 1870.*

THE TRAGEDIES OF  
ÆSCHYLOS

A NEW TRANSLATION, WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY, AND  
AN APPENDIX OF RHYMED CHORAL ODES

BY E. H. PLUMPTRE, M.A.

VOLUME I.



STRAHAN & CO., PUBLISHERS

56 LUDGATE HILL, LONDON

1868.

753

E p  
186.8  
v.1

no vol  
186.8

EDINBURGH :  
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,  
PAUL'S WORK.

Howison Mem Library

TO  
THE MOST REVEREND  
RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH D.D.,  
ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

DEAR friend, of old true guide of pilgrims known,  
Leading their steps where Wisdom's fair pearls lie,  
With orient gems, in Truth's rich treasury,  
On to the altar-stairs and sapphire Throne,—  
Now reaping harvest which thou hast not sown,  
The heaped-up debt of far ancestral crimes,  
Bearing the brunt of these our troublous times,  
While mists are thick, and loud the night-winds moan ;  
Scant leisure thine to look with studious eyes  
On these poor transcripts of a glorious page,  
The heathen's dim, 'unconscious prophecies,'  
The dreams of Hellas in her golden age :  
Nay, gird thee to thy task, come good, come ill,  
And so 'mid storms and fears thy Master's hest fulfil.

*October 14, 1868.*

361067



## P R E F A C E.

---

I HAVE been led by the interest which I found in the work of translating Sophocles, and in part also by the reception which my translation met with, to enter on another, and, in some respects, more difficult task, in which I have had predecessors at once more numerous and of higher mark. I leave it to others to compare the merits and defects of my work with theirs.

I have adhered in it to the plan of using for the Choral Odes such unrhymed metres, observing the strophic and antistrophic arrangement, as seemed to me most analogous in their general rhythmical effect to those of the original; while, for the sake of those who cannot abandon their preference for the form with

which they are more familiar, I have added, in an Appendix, a rhymed version of the chief Odes of the Oresteian trilogy. Those in the other dramas did not seem to me of equal interest, or to lend themselves with equal facility to a like attempt.

I have for the most part followed the text of Mr Paley's edition of 1861, and, in common with all students of Æschylos, I have to acknowledge a large debt of gratitude to him both for his textual criticism and for the varied amount of illustrative material which he has brought together in his notes. It is right to name Professor Conington also as at once among the most distinguished of those with whose labours my own will have to be compared, and as one who has done for Æschylos at Oxford what Mr Paley has done at Cambridge, bringing to bear on the study of his dramas at once the accuracy of a critic and the insight of a poet. Had his work as a translator been carried further, had the late Dean of St Paul's left us more than the single tragedy of the *Agamemnon*, or my friend, Miss Swanwick, been able to complete what she began so well in her version of the Oresteian trilogy, I should probably not have undertaken the work which I have now brought to a conclusion. I have felt, how-

ever, that it was desirable for the large mass of readers to whom the culture which comes through the study of Greek literature in the inimitable completeness of the originals is more or less inaccessible, that there should be a translation within their reach, embracing all that has been left to us by one who takes all but the highest place among the tragic poets of Athens, and making it, as far as was possible, intelligible and interesting in its connexion with the history of Greek thought, political and theological.

I have indicated by an asterisk (\*) passages where the reading or the rendering is more or less conjectural, and in which therefore the student would do well to consult the notes of commentators. Passages which are regarded as spurious by editors of authority are placed between brackets [ ].

It only remains that I should once again acknowledge my obligations to my friend the Rev. Charles Hole, for much help kindly given in the progress of my work through the press.

6th October 1868.





## CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

---

	PAGE
LIFE OF ÆSCHYLOS, . . . . .	xiii
AGAMEMNON, . . . . .	1
CHOËPHORI, OR THE LIBATION-POURERS, . . . . .	93
EUMENIDES, . . . . .	153



## LIFE OF ÆSCHYLOS.

---

THE materials for a life of Æschylos are like in kind and quantity to those which we possess for a life of Sophocles. A brief anonymous memoir, written probably some four or five hundred years after his death,<sup>1</sup> a few scattered facts in scholia and lexicons, a few anecdotes or allusions in contemporary, or all but contemporary, authors; this is all we have to deal with.<sup>2</sup> My purpose in this essay is to do for the older as I have done for the younger dramatist, to put these *disjecta membra*

<sup>1</sup> The memoir in question is prefixed to the Medicean MS. of the plays, and is to be found in most editions. It is the authority for all statements in the text for which no special reference is given.

<sup>2</sup> In some respects, indeed, the earlier dramatist has fared worse than the later. Even Germany supplies but two monographs *De Vitâ Æschyli*, one by Dahm, the other by Petersen, and these are meagre and uninteresting as compared with those by Lessing and Schöll on the life of Sophocles.

together in such an order as may best show what the man himself was, to illustrate them from the poet's own works, to throw light on them from the history of the period in which he lived.

(1.) The birth of Æschylos<sup>1</sup> is fixed partly by dates given by Suidas and in the Arundel Inscriptions, partly by a conjectural emendation of the text of the anonymous biographer, at B.C. 525. Both his parentage and his place of birth may be thought of as having influenced his poetry. He was an Eupatrid, one of the old noble families of Attica, born at a time when the separation between them and the other citizens was far more strongly marked than at a later period, and we find the feelings of his class clinging to him through life. He delights to dwell on the nobler character, the more generous treatment even of slaves, to be found in the "heirs of ancient wealth" than in the *nouveaux riches*, who rose into prominence and power under Pericles, (*Agam.* ver. 1010-12.) He utters his protest through the lips of Athena against defiling the "clear stream" of the old nobility with

<sup>1</sup> The name, a diminutive of *αἰσχρὸς*, and so meaning "little and ugly," is of an unusual type, and might almost seem to imply some personal deformity in the child to whom it was given. May we connect this with the passionate, irascible temper by which the poet was characterised?

the "foul mire" of aliens and traders,<sup>1</sup> (*Eumen.* v. 665.) With this as the dominant feeling in his mind, he attached himself to the cause of Kimon as against Pericles, and, as we shall see hereafter, defended the Areiopagos against the attacks that threatened its authority. Something of the same temper—as of one who places noble blood above wealth, because it more often goes together with nobleness of nature—is seen in his scorn for "gold-spangled" houses where the hands of those who dwell in them are soiled, (*Agam.* v. 748,) while he maintains that there is no inevitable connexion between greatness and the fall that so often follows on it, that there are families in which prosperity and honour pass on from generation to generation, (*Agam.* v. 736.)

Nor can the fact that he was born at Eleusis be considered as of less importance. Initiation into the Mysteries that were connected with that spot, may have been postponed, indeed, (if he was ever actually initiated<sup>2</sup>) to mature age. But the

<sup>1</sup> One may note the parallelism of Dante's vehement protest against "*la gente nuova*," "*le bestie Fiesolane*," that had been received into Florence from neighbouring cities, or made their way to power by "*i subiti guadagni*."—*Infern.* xv. 62, xvi. 73.

<sup>2</sup> The question remains *sub judice*. On the one side there is the statement preserved by Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromata*, (ii. p. 166,) that when accused before the Areiopagos of

local influence must have been round him from the first. Men came there to pass through the rites of probation, counted it the blessedness of their life to be admitted by the hierophant, spoke of it as unfolding the secrets of immortality. Theories as to the nature and teacher of these and other mysteries, have indeed varied very widely.<sup>1</sup> Some have seen in them the channels by which a primitive religion was kept from perishing utterly, and faith in the providence, perhaps in the unity, of God, and in a future retribution, transmitted to fit recipients. Others have discerned nothing more than a Phallic symbolism of the reproductive powers of nature, the attractions of which lay in the debas-

having brought the mysteries on the stage, he defended himself by pleading that he had never been initiated. On the other, we have the fact that Aristophanes, in the *Frogs*, (v. 886,) represents him as invoking Demêter,

“Who hast trained my soul  
To meetness for thy holy mysteries.”

The latter testimony, as being nearly contemporary, seems to have greatest weight. Aristotle, however, in referring to the case as illustrating his doctrine of sins of ignorance, (*Eth. Nicom.* iii. 2,) may be thrown into the other scale, as corroborating the tradition given by Clement.

<sup>1</sup> Warburton, in his *Divine Legation of Moses*, has brought together most of the ancient authorities on the subject. Lobeck, in a treatise bearing the title of *Aglaophamus*, has treated the question with a more exhaustive scholarship. St Croix's *Recherches sur les Mysteres du Paganisme* may also be consulted.

ing character of the symbols and the stimulus they supplied to a prurient imagination. Others have found in them symbols, indeed, but symbols no longer understood, the story which had once clothed a thought being dramatised for its own sake, till the thought itself was forgotten in the interest of the fantastic mythos that embodied it. With views so divergent before us, we cannot safely build much on any estimate of the influence which the mysteries of Eleusis may have exercised upon the mind of Æschylos. It may be suggested, perhaps, that they, like all other symbolic rites, degenerated as they grew older; that whatever of obscenity or triviality was in them, was of later growth; that if they were parables of Nature and her life-giving power, they also helped men to think of that life as extending into a more distant future. Like the secrets of Freemasonry, they may have had a religious meaning at first, which afterwards degenerated into a mere conventional mystery, and a fantastic triviality which a later age strove in vain to re-clothe with a religious significance. The language in which Sophocles and Pindar speak of them<sup>1</sup> forbids us to think

<sup>1</sup> Sophocles, *Fragm.* 719—

“ Thrice happy they who having seen these rites,  
VOL. I. b



of them as in his time other than witnesses to a loftier truth than that held by the uninitiated many. The stress laid by Æschylos on the righteous government of God, on the immortality of the spirits of the dead, may possibly be traceable to that witness. His reverence for the Goddess of Eleusis was at all events thought of as so characteristic, that he is represented, in the Aristophanic caricature already quoted, as swearing by her name and no other.

The education of Æschylos would, in its main outlines, be such as has been described in my life of Sophocles. It would want, indeed, that which the latter found as he grew to manhood in the dramas of Æschylos himself. It would want also the poetry of Pindar.<sup>1</sup> But the music, and the athletic training, and the poetry of Homer, were already there to form the character and develop its nascent powers. The care taken by Peisistra-

Then pass to Hades : there to these alone  
Is granted life ; all others evil find."

Pindar, *Thren. Fragm.* 8—

"Blessed is he who having looked on them,  
Passes below the hollow earth, for he  
Knows life's true end, and Zeus-given sov'reignty."

<sup>1</sup> Pindar and Simonides were, however, contemporaries of the great dramatist, and might easily exercise some influence on the growth of his genius.

tos to collect and arrange the so-called Homeric poems, and the formation of a library at Athens by his sons Hippias and Hipparchos, were at once symptoms and causes of the intellectual life which was about to bud and blossom and bear fruit with such unexampled rapidity. The education of the young men of Athens was based thenceforward upon Homer. The cycle of the *Iliad* supplied nearly the whole material which was to be worked up by the coming dramatists. Æschylos himself spoke of his tragedies as being but "made-up dishes" (τεμαχῆ) from the great Homeric banquet, (*Athen.* viii. p. 347.) Nor can we forget that the name which has stamped itself upon dramatic art was then beginning to be known, and that the works of Thespis began, ten years before the birth of Æschylos, to give a new character to the festival of the Dionysia. Concurrently with the influence of the heroic, there must also have been that of the early gnomic poetry of Greece. The sententious morality of Theognis appears to have impressed itself on a mind which loved to reproduce even the earlier, simpler proverbs that entered into the common speech of men, those which bade them not to "kick against the pricks," or taught them that "out of a little seed may spring a mighty tree," that "pain is gain," that "wisdom

comes by sorrow," that "the highest wisdom is self-knowledge," and the like. And, accordingly, the parallelisms between the two writers are striking enough to exclude the notion of mere coincidence.\*

\* I owe the references to these passages to a note of Mr Paley's.

Comp. (1) *Theognis*. vv. 44-9—

"In all my deeds thou 'lt find me like pure gold,  
Still glowing red, though tried by touchstone's test,  
And the black stain not e'en the surface mars."

*Agam.* v. 381—

"And like to worthless bronze,  
By friction tried and tests,  
It turns to tarnished blackness in its hue."

(2) *Theogn.* v. 151—

"Satiety begetteth Recklessness,  
When prosperous fortune comes to villain soul."

*Agam.* v. 738—

"But Recklessness of old  
Is wont to breed another Recklessness ;  
That other in its turn  
Begets Satiety."

(3) *Theogn.* v. 961—

"Many there are with false mood counterfeit,  
Who hide their lies with show of short-lived zeal."

*Agam.* v. 760—

"Men there are who right transgressing,  
Semblance honour more than being :  
O'er the sufferer all are ready  
Wail of bitter grief to utter,  
Though the piercing pang of sorrow  
Never to their heart approaches ;

The resemblance is, however, in mind and teaching much more than in words and images. There is the same dread of the evils of over-prosperous fortune, the same reverence for the rights of the suppliant and the guest, the same belief in a Nemesis working at times slowly and secretly, but sure to manifest itself at last as the avenger of outrage, and turbulence, and wrong. Even the tone in which the ethical poet speaks of the chastisement which the Gods had sent upon the haughty Medes, (vv. 764 and 775) is in the same key as that which pervades the *Persians* of the dramatist. Both are intensely national; both are also intensely the poets of an aristocracy. Theognis complains (vv. 53-58)—

“This State is still a State, but men are changed ;  
Those who erewhile knew nought of Right and Law,  
And clad in goatskin lived outside the gates,  
These are now known as nobles, and the men  
Who once were noble, now as cowards live.  
Men honour wealth, and wealth corrupts the blood,  
Bad marrying good, and good with villains wed.”

Just as Æschylos makes Athena warn her people—

“But if with streams defiled and tainted soil  
Clear river thou pollute, no drink thou’lt find.”—

*Eumen.* v. 603.

---

So with counterfeit rejoicing  
Men strain faces that are smileless.”

and utters his complaint that—

“ Now Success  
Is man's sole God and more.”

—*Lib.-Poursers*, v. 50.

The chronological relation of the two poets to each other was just such as to bring the younger poet under the influence of the older. Theognis lived to witness the overthrow of the Persians, and died just as Æschylos was rising into fame.

The reference in *Fragm.* 123 to the story of the eagle shot with one of its own feathers, as taken from the *Libyan Fables*, seems to indicate an acquaintance also with that form of composition which, about this time, was travelling from Asia and Africa into the literature of Greece.

The legend which has come down to us through Pausanias (*Att.* i. 21, § 3,) though too remote in time to claim a place among the elements of a biography, may yet be received as the expression of the influence exercised on Æschylos by the new art which Thespis had introduced, and its religious associations. “He was set,” so the story runs, “to watch grapes as they were ripening for the vintage, and fell asleep: And lo! as he slept, Dionysos appeared to him, and bade him give himself to write tragedies for the great festival of the God. And when he awoke, he found

himself invested with new powers of thought and utterance, and the work was as easy to him as if he had been trained to it for many years." The parable shadows forth, as I have said elsewhere, the chief characteristics both of the excellence and the faults of Æschylos,—the presence of a creative power flaming as with a divine light, striking out lofty thoughts, and clothing them in words of singular felicity, yet wanting in the supreme refinement and equilibrium of a deliberate and conscious art.

Of the dramatic poets who preceded him we know the names, and little more. The date assigned to the first exhibition of tragedies at Athens by Thespis is B.C. 535. So far as we can judge amid conflicting statements of the precise nature of the changes introduced by him, they consisted—(1.) In the introduction of new subjects, still, however, confined to the Dionysiac cycle; (2.) in the addition of dialogue to the choral songs which had previously made up, as it were, the *libretto* of the Dionysian opera; and (3.) in the use of masks, or pigments, to make personation of characters more life-like. Groups of satyrs, following the chariot of the God, singing his adventures, and representing some of these adventures in rude mimetic action, seem to have

furnished the starting-point of Greek drama. Then came, at Sikyon or elsewhere, (Herod. v. 67,) the celebration of the deeds of other gods or of the heroes of the Homeric cycle, but still confined to odes, and with a satyr chorus as the chief or only actors.<sup>1</sup> The recitation of the Homeric poems by the travelling minstrels known as Rhapsodists, would naturally tend to enlarge the range of the subjects in which spectators were interested. Thespis had the credit of seizing on the opening thus given, and introducing an actor on the stage conversing with the chorus. Possessed of the versatile mimetic power which has in our own times led men like Charles Matthews and Albert Smith to sustain many characters, and so to be the one actor in a drama which yet had something of a plot, he appeared now in one dress, now in another; now, *e.g.*, as Dionysos, now as Pen-theus, now as Agave; and so on, representing the whole story which we find in the *Bacchæ* of Euripides. At first, apparently, the change was in the mode rather than in the subjects. When these, too, were altered, and when the people came

<sup>1</sup> The people of Sikyon, the historian tells us, honoured the hero Adrastus, the son of Talao, with "tragic choruses" which celebrated his adventures, and which were transferred by Cleisthenes to Dionysos.

to the vintage festival, and found, as in the plays of Phrynichos and Æschylos, nothing that reminded them of the vintage God; they missed the rough, coarse mirth in which they had revelled, and asked in words which passed into a proverb, "What has this to do with Dionysos?"\* The change from one cycle of subjects to the whole range of the legends of the heroic age was analogous to that which passed over the English drama when *Ferrex and Porrex* and *Gorboduc* took the place of the "mysteries" and "miracle plays" of an earlier period. The later arrangement, which made a satyric drama the necessary completion of a tragic trilogy, (as the Christmas pantomime comes, in the modern drama, after the five-act tragedy,) was probably of the nature of a compromise between the tastes of the men of culture and those of the people, who still craved for something of the old rough sport, and frolicsome, rampant humour.

Phrynichos, whose name thus meets us in conjunction with that of Æschylos, (he gained his first prize B.C. 511, and his last B.C. 476,) went further in the development of the new art. The impulse given to the study of Homer by the influ-

\* Plutarch, *Sympos.* ii. p. 1092.



ence of Peisistratos, supplied him, as it afterwards supplied his successors, not only, as has been said, with an almost inexhaustible material, loftier and nobler than the subjects of the old Dionysian mimes or the earlier dramas of Thespis, but also with a higher culture generally. The choral odes of his dramas were long remembered as at once exquisitely sweet, and pure and lofty in their tone. With Aristophanes, he is the type of the older and better style of poetry and music, as compared with later and more artificial refinements. His songs are "sweet as the honey of the bee." He himself is the "master of all singers."<sup>1</sup> The introduction of masks for the female characters, and of solemn measures for the rhythmical movements of the chorus, was also ascribed to him. Perhaps the most striking fact in connexion with him is, that he was the first to seize on the facts of contemporary history as subjects for his dramas, and in B.C. 494, brought on the stage the capture of Miletos, which had just fallen into the hands of the Persians. With a just perception of the true purpose of the drama, the Athenians, though moved to tears by the sorrows which were thus brought before them, felt

<sup>1</sup> Athen. viii. p. 348; Aristoph. *Birds*, v. 748; *Wasps*, vv. 219-269; *Frogs*, vv. 911-1294; *Theam.* v. 164.

that the sufferings of a city so nearly related to them should not be displayed for the amusement of the people. They fined the poet a thousand drachmæ, and forbade the reproduction of the drama. Taught by this experience, at a later period, with the victorious Themistocles as his *chorâgos*, he dramatised, not the disasters, but the successes of the Athenians; and in a drama which bore the title of the *Phœnikians*, represented, probably in B.C. 476, the defeat of Xerxes, and so set the example which Æschylos followed in his *Persians*. Phrynichos, however, did not stand alone. The intellectual activity of the time threw itself at Athens into this line of work, and little as we know of Chœrilos, Pratinas, and other contemporaries, we must bear in mind that they were there, stimulating the mind of Æschylos to emulation, and contributing, each of them, some new improvement to the progress of the art.

But before we enter on the dramatic career of him who was to surpass them all, it will be well to note some other influences to which he must, in the nature of things, have been exposed, and the operation of which we can actually trace in his writings.

(1.) Foremost among these must be noted the spirit of enterprise which was leading the Greeks

to voyages of discovery and to settlements in remote lands. The temper, of which the *Odyssey*, and the legend of the Argonauts, were the first-fruits, had rapidly developed itself in them. They had begun to establish themselves in Egypt in the time of Psammitichos, and the wonders which the land of the Nile presented to their view, drew travellers who, like Herodotos a little later, gazed round them in astonishment, and sought to discover affinities between the myths of Egypt and those of Hellas. Others pressed on, as Herodotos also did, to the land of the two great rivers, to the cities on the shores of the Euphrates and the Tigris, to those of the Medes and Persians. The invasion of Syria and the seaboard of the Euxine by the Skythians, had brought them also into prominence, increased, of course, by the stories of the expedition of Dareios against them. In the West also, colonies of Greeks had settled in the south of Italy and Sicily. The marvels of Skylla and Charybdis, of Ætna and the Kyclops, of Atlas and the pillars of Heracles, and the Islands of the Blessed, and the mysterious Atlantis, had impressed themselves on their imagination. Æschylos himself, there is some reason to believe, shared in some of these adventurous voyages, and visited Sicily before he had reached the age of

twenty-six, before his success as a dramatist began.<sup>1</sup> When he dwells on the wonders which travellers had told, he may have reproduced what he had thus heard himself. When he went to the court of Hieron after his defeat by Sophocles, it was not as a stranger, but as one who had already made friends there, and was sure of patronage. He at any rate shared in the spirit which delighted in these reports from far-off lands. In proportion to the distance, the tales of travellers were stranger and more fantastic. What the Spanish Main and El Dorado, and the "still vexed Bermoothes" and Prester John, were to the Elizabethan dramatists, that the one-eyed Arimaspi, and the long-lived, happy Hyperborei, and the Gorgons, and the Kyclops were to the dramatic poets of Athens. And in Æschylos the position which they occupy is obviously a prominent one. In the *Prometheus* the wanderings of Io are brought in, if in part for deeper mythological reasons, yet in part also to enable the tale of these marvels to be told fully. In it and in the

<sup>1</sup> The question lies more or less in the region of conjecture. His migration to Sicily is assigned by different writers now to this, now to that cause, and is placed by some before, by some after, the death of Gelon. I follow Hermann (*Opusc. ii., De Choro Eumen.*) in the hypothesis that the accounts may be reconciled by assuming three or more distinct journeys.

*Suppliants* he yields to the fascination of the mysterious legends of Io and the "touch-born" Epaphos, and claims a common origin for the Argives and the Egyptians. He revels, and his hearers must have revelled, (some of them remembering their own adventures,) in the uncouth names and wild imagery into which he thus plunges. He delights, as Milton delighted, in the rhythmic grandeur of semi-barbaric names, each with its associations of mystery and wonder.

(2.) As the Greeks were thus stimulated in their intellectual life by the spirit of discovery, so also were they by their struggle for political freedom against the "tyranny" of Peisistratos and his sons, and by the contest—imminent as Æschylos was growing up to manhood, and over before any of his extant tragedies were composed—with the non-Hellenic races gathered under the command, first of Dareios and then of Xerxes. What Spain was to the poets of England under Elizabeth, (to return to the analogy already suggested,) Persia was to those of Greece, and the victory of Salamis had its analogue in the overthrow of the Armada. It was the lot of Sophocles, then a mere stripling, to lead the choral band that celebrated that victory. It was the work of Æschylos, in the *Persians*, (probably the earliest of his extant plays,) to give it

a yet more illustrious and lasting monument ; to bring before an Athenian audience the strange dresses, and the servile prostrations, and the wild wailings, and the strange-sounding names of the defeated invaders. But beyond the limits of that play we find traces of the same feeling. The pride and pomp of the " barbarian " are instanced in the embroidered tapestry which Clytæmnestra spreads for the march of Agamemnon, in order that he may bring upon himself the wrath of the Hellenic Gods, (*Agam.* 892.)

(3.) I am disposed to assign a larger share of influence upon the character and poetry of Æschylos than is commonly recognised, to that strange mysterious personage who appeared for a short moment on the stage of Athenian history about seventy years before his birth, (B.C. 596,) Epimenides, the prophet of Crete. Scanty as are the materials for any history of the man or of his teaching, it is clear that at the time his fame was like in kind and almost equal in degree to that of Pythagoras.<sup>1</sup> The ascetic life, (it was

<sup>1</sup> It has been often said, as by Cicero, (*Tusc. Disp.* ii. 10,) that Æschylos was " non poeta solum, sed etiam Pythagoreus ; " and Mr Paley, in his Preface, has enlarged on the thought, and pointed out many interesting coincidences between the poet and the philosopher. For the most part, however, they belong to tenets

said that no man ever saw him eat;) the ecstatic state which issued in prophetic utterances, and led men to think that he was communing with the Gods; the sleep, prolonged through fifty years, out of which he woke with a new and heaven-taught wisdom;—all this invested him in the eyes of the Greeks with a mysterious, supernatural character.<sup>1</sup> Like Balaam the son of Beor, he was sent for from far countries to bless or to curse, to teach men how to purify their land from the guilt of blood, to appease their dread of the unseen Powers. His arrival at Athens, in obedience to the summons which called him to their help, when pestilence and discord seemed to proclaim the wrath of the Gods against the guilt which the “bloody house” of the Alcæonidæ had brought upon the land by their treacherous murder of Kylon and his adherents, must have left a deep impression. Echoes of his teaching (so far as that teaching has come down to us in fragmentary notices) are found in Æschylos.

(a.) The prophet refers all his power to predict

characteristic of both Pythagoras and Epimenides, and the derivation is more easily traceable in the case of the latter than of the former.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Heinrich's elaborate monograph, *Epimenides aus Kreta*, where all that is known about him is brought together and discussed, and Hoeck's *Kreta*, iii. 2, s. 11.

to the wisdom which he had gained in his long slumber, and which was renewed in visions of the night.<sup>1</sup> The poet proclaims—

“ And slowly dropping on the heart in sleep,  
Comes crime-recording care,  
And makes the unwilling yield to wiser thoughts.”  
—*Agam.* v. 173.

(b.) The idea of a transmitted pollution cleaving to a family from generation to generation, sin becoming the penalty of sin, until some one comes who, by penitence and prayer and rites of expiation, obtains pardon and deliverance, was that which had brought Epimenides to Athens. He is pre-eminently the “purifier,” the “prophet-healer,” the servant of Apollo in the work of cleansing and clearing the guilty, as that god is brought before us in the *Eumenides*. It is needless to point out that this is throughout the key-note of the Oresteian trilogy. We meet it in Clytæmnestra’s reference to the Alastor, the avenging fiend, with whom she identifies herself (*Agam.* v. 1478) in her hope that her crime will

“ At last have freed her house  
From fratricidal hate,” (*Agam.* v. 1552 ;)

in the stress which Orestes lays on the rites of

<sup>1</sup> Maximus Tyr. xxxviii. 3.



purification that have cleansed him, (*Eumen.* v. 423.) The more generalised teaching,

“But how to blot the guilt of kindred blood,  
This needs a great atonement, *many victims*  
*Falling to many Gods, to heal the woe,”*

—(*Suppl.* v. 444.)

almost reproduces the process by which Epimenides is said to have purified Athens by turning loose a flock of sheep, black and white mingled, and sacrificing them to the Gods at whose altars they fell, erecting an altar, if they rested where none existed previously, to the UNKNOWN or to an unnamed GOD. Even the sacrifice of Iphigeneia has a parallel in the story preserved by Athenæos (xiii. 8), that a noble youth, Cratinos, had immolated himself, with the sanction of the Cretan prophet, to appease the wrath of the Gods.

(c.) Epimenides, it is said, on leaving Athens, told its inhabitants to erect on the Areiopagos<sup>1</sup> two unhewn stones as altars to Outrage (*ὕβρις*) and Shamelessness. They were to look on those personified attributes as the demons who had vexed their city, and whom they must entreat never again to trouble them. It is impossible, I think, not to recognise an echo of that teaching, (1) in the reverence which Æschylos shows in the last play of

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Alex., *Protrept.*, p. 22; Cicero, *De Legibus*, ii. 11.

the Oresteian trilogy for the court of the Areiopagos; and (2) in the like personification of the self-same evil Powers—

“ But Outrage (*ὄβρις*) done of old  
Is wont to breed another Outrage still,  
Sporting its youth in human miseries,  
At once, or whensoever the fixed time comes :  
This young one, in its turn,  
Begets Satiety,  
And Power that none can war with or resist,  
Daring that Heaven defies.”

(d.) The Cretan prophet is said to have done much to naturalise at Athens the worship of the Chthonian Goddesses, (dwelling, *i.e.*, in the thick darkness below the Earth,) known as the Erinyes or Eumenides, who are so prominent in the poetry of Æschylos.<sup>1</sup> The temple to them, which stood on the Areiopagos, and which is glorified in the closing scene of the trilogy, was said to have been built under the direction of Epimenides.

(e.) The seer is said to have been at one time on the point of dedicating a temple to the Muses, when a voice from heaven bade him stop, and be for the future a worshipper of Zeus only.<sup>2</sup> Whatever view we may take of this, as indicating a step upwards to a monotheistic creed, we cannot fail

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laert., i. 12 ; Plutarch., *Solon.*, c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Diog. Laert. i. 10.

to see a close parallel to it in the words of the dramatist—

“ O Zeus—whate’er He be,  
If that name please him well,  
By that on him I call,  
Weighing all other names, I fail to guess  
Aught else but Zeus.”—*Agam.* v. 155.

(f.) Lastly, Epimenides is said to have restrained the unmeasured barbaric wailing over the dead to which the women of Athens had till then been accustomed.<sup>1</sup> And here, too, his teaching is echoed by Æschylos. He brings that kind of wailing forward in the *Persians* as characteristic of barbarian manners; he hardly ever speaks of it but in connexion with some barbaric name, Mariandynian, Kissian, or the like; he puts into the mouth of Eteocles a vehement protest against it, (*Seven ag. Thebes*, vv. 169–190.)

With a genius so formed and fashioned, Æschylos followed the leading of the time, and entered on his work as a dramatic writer. He resembled Phrynichos, as we have seen, in his choice of heroic legends or contemporary history, instead of the revel mimes of the older Dionysia. And the language in which the tales were clothed rose also far above the earlier level. He was the first of

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch., *Solon.*, c. 12.

the Greeks to "build the lofty rhyme,"<sup>1</sup> to bring out the strange compound words, "neck-breaking," "cumbrous," "pegged and wedged and dove-tailed," as Aristophanes called them, coined in the mint of his own brain; to startle the eyes as well as ears of his audience with figures of monstrous forms of animals, winged dragons, beasts half-cock and half-horse, half-goat and half-stag, like those that draw the chariots of Okeanos in the *Prometheus*, of Athena in the *Eumenides*; to array his actors in stately robes, so gorgeous that they were afterwards copied by priests in temples and by the hierophants of mysteries;<sup>2</sup> to trust to the "sensation" caused by the presence of actors who were prominent through the whole action of a play, but never opened their lips, or spoke but a single sentence.<sup>3</sup> If we would appreciate his dramas as we read them, without the accessories which accompanied them as they were performed, we must remember that they were in a high

<sup>1</sup> Aristoph. *Frogs*, 943.

<sup>2</sup> Athen. i. p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Aristoph. *Frogs*, vv. 906-912. In this apparently he followed Phrynichos. It probably belonged to his earlier manner. No instance of it occurs in the seven extant tragedies. Aristophanes refers to Achilles and Niobe as the characters thus represented. In the *Libation-Pourers*, however, Pylades, though present throughout the greater part of the action of the play, speaks but once.

degree *spectacles* as well as poems,—in some instances spectacles rather than poems,—with but few speakers, but with all the scenic effect of dresses, processions, and decorations.

The personal temperament of the man seems to have been in harmony with these characteristics of his genius. Vehement, passionate, irascible; writing his tragedies (as later critics judged) as if half-drunk, doing (as Sophocles said of him) what was right in his art without knowing why;<sup>1</sup> following the impulses that led him to strange themes and dark problems, rather than aiming at the perfection of a complete, all-sided culture; frowning with shaggy brows, like a wild bull, glaring fiercely, and bursting into a storm of wrath when annoyed by critics or rival poets; a Marlow rather than a Shakespeare: this is the portrait sketched by one who must have painted a figure still fresh in the minds of the Athenians.<sup>2</sup> Such a man, both by birth and disposition, was likely to attach himself to the aristocratic party, and to look with scorn on the claims of the *demos* to a larger share of power. His ancestors had fought against Peisistratos, and he too entered his protest against that form of government which the

<sup>1</sup> Athen. x. p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> Aristoph. *Frogs*, vv. 802–855.

Greeks called a *tyranny*, the despotism of a political adventurer, self-raised to sovereign power, without the divine sanction which attached to the old hereditary kings who traced their descent from Zeus himself.<sup>1</sup> Through his whole life he was faithful to his early creed. There is hardly a play in which some political bias in that direction may not be distinctly traced. The time of his greatest popularity was during the ascendancy first of Aristeides and then of Kimon. When his star waned before the clearer, calmer, less fitful light of Sophocles, the change synchronised with the rise of Pericles to political supremacy. It was natural with such a character that his career as a dramatist and a man should be somewhat more chequered than that of his great successor. Sophocles was from first to last the favourite of the Athenians,—easy, genial, contented. Æschylos—quick to take offence, quick also to give it; startling men by strange *tours de force*; coming into direct collision with their feelings, moral, political and religious; wounding them where they were most susceptible—experienced the mutability of popular favour in a more than ordinary degree. The incidents of his life, so far as they are known to us, seem to point to a series of irritations, mis-

See the passages quoted in p. lii.

understandings, and temporary alienations between him and his countrymen.

The date B.C. 499 is fixed for his first dramatic contest with Pratinas and Chœrilos.<sup>1</sup> He was not successful; but the excitement of the competition drew so great a crowd of spectators, that the wooden scaffolding on which they sat gave way.<sup>2</sup> Partly hurt at his defeat, partly urged by the spirit of adventure, he went, as has been said, in the same year to Sicily. His absence did not last long. He was at Athens when the expedition of Datis and Artaphernes threatened the liberties of Greece, and he and his brother Kynægeiros fought at Marathon. Like all who took part in that first great battle in Athenian history, he looked back on it as the great glory of his life. When he wrote his own epitaph, in advanced age and in a distant land, it was to record, not that he had been a poet and had won thirteen prizes from the Athenian people, but that the "plain of Marathon

<sup>1</sup> The chronology depends on a combination of the two notices in Suidas under the headings *Æschylos* and *Pratinas*.

<sup>2</sup> Pausan. *Att.* i. 4; Suidas, *l.c.* It is interesting to note that this disaster led the Athenians to build their first stone theatre for the Dionysiac festivals, and so prepared the way for the stately buskin, and the gorgeous dresses, and the other stage effects which Æschylos and his contemporaries were not slow to introduce.

and the long-haired Mede" could attest his well-tried valour.<sup>1</sup>

The glory of Marathon was, however, probably followed by the mortification of another defeat. The Athenians, (already pushing forward to intellectual as well as military excellence,) wanted for those who had fallen in that battle an elegy that should be worthy of their fame, and when the prize was awarded to Simonides, Æschylos, it is said, was irritated at his failure, and again took his departure for Sicily in B.C. 488.<sup>2</sup> Gelon was at that time rising to power, and with him, almost sharing his authority, was his brother Hieron. In that prince, the patron of poets and philosophers, the friend of Pindar and Simonides,—

<sup>1</sup> The epitaph is given, p. lviii.

<sup>2</sup> The two epitaphs are given in the *Anthologia Græca*, and may be rendered as follows :—

SIMONIDES.

Farewell, ye heroes, warriors famed in fight,  
Ye youth of Athens, horsemen strong in might,  
Who for your goodly country gave your prime,  
And in the sight of all of Hellas' clime,  
Fought against myriads with a faith sublime !

ÆSCHYLOS.

These valiant swordsmen gloomy Fate laid low,  
In act to free the plains where roam the sheep,  
But still for those who yielded to the blow  
Lives glory, though in Ossa's dust they sleep.



immortalised by the former as victor at Olympic games,—he found a liberal patron. Sicily became almost a second home to him, a place of refuge after any trouble or disappointment in his own city. This time, however, his absence was not of long duration, and in the interval between Marathon and Salamis, in B.C. 484, he was for the first time successful in his competition with those who had been the leading dramatic poets, Pratinas, Phrynichos, and Chœrilos. It was the beginning of a series of thirteen like successes.<sup>1</sup> Most, if not all, the prizes awarded to him were obtained between that date and B.C. 470. It was the period when the policy of Kimon and Aristides was in the ascendant, when the Eupatrids were yet able to resist the encroachments of the democracy. With that policy then, as afterwards, Æschylos identified himself. He was the poet of the conservative party, as Sophocles was afterwards the representative poet of the cultivated liberalism of that of Pericles.

Of the plays now extant, the *Persians* stands first in order of time. Written, as it was, within eight years of the battle of Salamis, it appealed to

<sup>1</sup> The total number of dramas ascribed to him is stated by Suidas as ninety, by the anonymous biographer as seventy. We have the titles of seventy-eight.

those in whose memories every incident of the battle was yet fresh. The vividness and minuteness of the account there given of the engagement seems to indicate that he himself, like his brother Ameinias, had a large share in the glory of the day.<sup>1</sup> It has accordingly the interest of being a contemporary record by an eye-witness, and represented before eye-witnesses, and gives, we may well believe, a truer account than that which we find forty years later in Herodotos, when there had been time for the growth of numerous embellishments, approaching in some instances almost to the character of legends. The drama itself is for us, perhaps, apart from this fact, one of the least interesting of the seven extant plays. At the time, it was probably accepted as worthy of the triumph which it celebrated. To understand the *Persians*, we must think of it as a spectacle,

<sup>1</sup> To Ameinias the Athenians awarded the *aristeia*, or prize of valour, as to the man who, of all the Greeks that fought at Salamis, had done the worthiest deeds. Some years afterwards, when Æschylos was accused of impiety, as having divulged the mysteries, and was on the point of being stoned, Ameinias was said to have shown the arm, the hand of which had been lost at Salamis, and with that to have pleaded his brother's cause. The judges yielded to the appeal, and gave a verdict of acquittal. This apparently was the trial of which Clement of Alexandria, in the passage already quoted, gives so different an account.—Ælian. V. H. v. 19.

performed before thousands of those who had fought themselves, or had had brothers or fathers in the battle, exulting over the thought that the Gods had fought for them, and that their enemies had been defeated. The nearest analogue in literature, in spite of the difference in form, is found in the Song of Deborah. The close of that hymn, picturing, as it does, the mother of Sisera looking out of her lattice, anticipating tidings of victory when she is about to hear those of utter failure, suggests a theme which, with a nation of greater dramatic power than the Hebrews, might have been developed as Æschylos does the like emotions in the mother of Xerxes. In each case the poem supplies facts which the history, compiled at a later period, omits or colours.<sup>1</sup> In both there is the same fiery glow, the same sense of a victory over aliens. In the work of the Athenian, we must not forget that what seems to us, as we read it, the monstrous iteration of interjections, cries, lamentations, must have been, as it was performed, one of its most striking features. It was because these wailings, and tearing of hair,

<sup>1</sup> Comp. *e.g.* the account of the disaster which befell the Persians as they crossed the frozen Strymon (*Pers.* vv. 500–510), and that of the destruction of the hosts of Jabin as they crossed the swollen torrent of the Kishon (*Judg.* v. 21, 22).

and beating of breasts, and rending of robes, were regarded as especially Asiatic and barbarous, that the Athenians loved to listen to, and to look on them, when they were associated with the defeat and disgrace of their foes. Their own civilisation had raised them above these violent displays of grief, and from the time of Solon, who had legislated against them, even wives and mothers had learnt to bear the deaths of those they loved with a more decent and tranquil sorrow.

The success which had attended this treatment of a naval engagement, led Æschylos, in his next trilogy, probably in the following year, (B.C. 471,) to take another equally warlike, ("full of Ares," as Aristophanes calls it,) and to represent in *The Seven who fought against Thebes* the incidents of a siege, the warriors heading the storming party, each bearing his shield, the leaders with some device and motto painted on it in bright colours, the women of the besieged city going in procession to offer their prayers at the shrines of the Gods, the scouts looking out from the ramparts, and bringing back word of the disposition of the enemy's forces, and the issue of the conflict. The fact that he was writing of a mythical, not of an actual war in which living men had taken part, robs *The Seven against Thebes*, indeed, of the interest which

attaches to the *Persians*. But here also there was a political purpose mingling with the poet's work. The bearing of the play was directed against the policy of aiming at the supremacy of Athens by attacking other Greek states. It brought before men the horrors that attend the capture of a city, and led them to ask whether these horrors should be perpetrated on a Hellenic city by those who spoke the same Hellenic speech, (*Seven ag. Thebes*. vv. 78-168.) It maintained, that is, the policy of Aristeides as against that of Themistocles, and when the words were uttered which described a statesman and a general "who sought to be *just* in deed as well as name,"<sup>1</sup> (v. 588,) the enthusiasm which burst out from an audience raised to the highest pitch of excitement, showed that the skill of the poet had not been wasted.

Within a few years, (in B.C. 468,) the career of success was interrupted by the rising genius of a poet of higher culture, and the first prize at the Dionysian festival was awarded to Sophocles, then in his twenty-ninth year. The defeat was, perhaps, the more mortifying as occurring under the direction of Kimon, the leader of the party to which Æschylos had attached himself.<sup>2</sup> It led him to leave

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Arist.* c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Kim.* Comp. the account in my *Life of Sophocles*.

Athens for a time, and to visit Sicily. Other causes may have contributed to that decision. He had incurred, it is said, at some period the date of which it is not easy to fix, the displeasure of the Athenians by introducing in his dramas some of the mystic rites which were confined to the initiated few. The spectators, seeing on the stage what many among them knew to belong to the mysteries of Eleusis, were roused to a wild frenzy, and rushed upon the poet, who, as himself acting, was on the stage. His life was in danger, and he only escaped by fleeing to the altar of Dionysos as to the privilege of sanctuary. By the intercession of members of the court of Areiopagos, he was rescued, brought to a more formal trial, and acquitted.<sup>1</sup> If the *Prometheus*, the date of

<sup>1</sup> The account is given by Eustratius (p. 40) in a passage quoted by Lobeck, (*Aglaoph.* i. 12.) The trilogy which gave occasion to the suspicion is said to have included the plays of Sisyphos, Iphigeneia, and Œdipus. Lobeck inclines to the belief, not that there was any disclosure of the secret *doctrines* of the mysteries, (if indeed there were any such,) but that some solemn stage procession, like that which we find at the close of the *Eumenides*, startled the Athenians by its resemblance to that with which the initiated were familiar. It is in connexion with this charge that we meet with the two versions of the story given respectively by Ælian and Clement of Alexandria—(1.) That his brother Ameinias pleaded for him with his handleless arm; (2.) That he defended himself by asserting that he had never

which is uncertain, had been performed before this time, it may well have contributed to shock the feelings of the Athenians. He had probably, as has been before stated, been previously acquainted with the country, and had already come within the attraction of the patronage extended by Hieron to artists and men of letters. Here, it is said, he composed dramas, the subject-matter of which was taken from local legends,—*The Women of Ætna*, and the like; and, at the request of Hieron, reproduced the *Persians* on the stage of Syracuse. Here too he may have heard of the ravages of the great volcanic eruption of B.C. 477, to which he refers in his *Prometheus* (vv. 370–380), even if he had not been one of the actual spectators during his previous visit.

The date assigned to the *Suppliants* rests upon the assumption that it is connected with the alliance between Argos and Athens, which was entered on in B.C. 461, and the war with the Persian forces in Egypt, upon which the Athenians had entered as allies of the Libyan prince Inaros and a section of the Egyptian population.<sup>1</sup> That connexion accounts for the popularity of a tragedy in which,

been initiated in the mysteries, and therefore could not divulge them.

<sup>1</sup> Thuc. i. 102–104.

as in the *Persians*, we find more of the excellence of a spectacle than a poem. The object was to represent the enemies of another race with whom they were in conflict, as more barbarous and insolent than the Persians themselves. The allusions to the wolves of Hellas as stronger than the dogs of Egypt; to the barley-bread and wine of the Hellenes as better than the byblos fruit and beer of the Egyptians, (*Suppl.*, vv. 740–930;) the implied reminder that there might be found affinities of race and religion among some of the Egyptians, in spite of diversities of dress and complexion;—all these had, we may well believe, a significance at the time which it is difficult for us now to estimate.

The date of the trilogy of which the *Prometheus Bound* forms a part, is more a matter of conjecture than that of any other of the plays of Æschylos. Some, on the strength of the reference to Ætna, (v. 374,) have supposed it to have been written shortly after the eruption took place B.C. 477; others have referred it to B.C. 470. In the absence of more direct evidence, it is open to maintain as probable that it belongs to the period after he had returned from Sicily, when allusions to its phænomena would be natural, and after the attention of the Athenians had been drawn, by



the force of circumstances, to the legends of Egypt. The prominence given to the episode of Io and Epaphos is hardly intelligible, unless it is taken in connexion with the position which that legend occupies in the *Suppliants*. The pervading unity of thought in the two plays, so far as they both deal with the seeming caprice and cruelty of Zeus, and yet imply an ultimate prevalence of his compassion, belongs to another region of inquiry. It may be touched on here as at least strengthening the circumstantial evidence of the probable nearness of the two plays as to the date of their composition. It is possible that the lines in which Prometheus generalises his experience as to the ingratitude of princes—

“ For somehow this disease in sovereignty  
Inheres, of never trusting to one's friends ”—

*Prom.* 230.

may have had their origin in some slight which the irascible poet may have thought he had received at the hands of Hieron.

The date of the Oresteian trilogy is fixed, both by external and internal evidence, at B.C. 458. In the ten years which had passed since the first success of Sophocles, the greater part of which had been spent by Æschylos abroad, the principles to

which the latter were most opposed had made rapid progress. He found on his return new men, new measures, a new philosophy, a new taste in poetry. The old order of the days of Marathon was passing away. Men who could claim no connexion with Eupatrid descent were pressing forward to the foremost place of power. The institutions which were held most sacred as the safeguard of Athenian religion were criticised and attacked. The court of Areiopagos, which had exercised an awful and undefined authority in all matters connected, directly or indirectly, with the religious life of the state, was covertly attacked under the plea of reforming its administration. Oracles and divinations no longer commanded men's reverence and trust. There were whispers that men were beginning to say that there was no God, or that the old name of Zeus was to pass away before those of a Supreme Intelligence, or a measureless Vortex. And the leader of the movement in all its bearings upon religion, politics, art, and thought, was one who inherited the curse of the Alcæonidæ, against whom the aristocratic party had revived the memory of that curse, who had been suspected himself of sacrilege and scepticism on account of his connexion with Anaxagoras.

It is impossible to mistake the bearing of the whole trilogy upon the state of things thus described. We hear the protest of the poet of conservatism against the coming changes, and his praise of the old Eupatrids, in the words which proclaim,—

“Great gain it is to meet with lords who own  
Ancestral wealth. But whoso reap full crops  
They never dared to hope for, these in all,  
And beyond measure, to their slaves are harsh.”

—*Agam.*, 1010-13.

The excellence of a constitutional government, such as the Athenians had inherited, and the necessity of reverence as its safeguard, is urged in the speech of Athena:

“I give my counsel to you, citizens,  
To reverence and guard well that form of state  
Which is not lawless nor tyrannical,  
And not to cast all fear from out the city.”

—*Eumen.*, 666-9.

The scepticism of those who could not trace a divine order in the mingled course of human life and its events, meets with his rebuke in terms which must have suggested a direct application to some well-known individual teacher like Anaxagoras:

“Yea, *one* there was who said  
The Gods deign not to care for mortal men,

By whom the grace of things inviolable  
Is trampled under foot :  
No fear of God had he."—*Agam.*, 360-4.

The idea of a curse hanging over the doers of guilt to the third and fourth generation, was dwelt upon as illustrated at every stage by the history of the sons of Atreus ; while the poet at once saved himself from the charge of making God the author of man's evil, and sharpened the edge of his attack upon the democratic leader, by declaring that the curse was transmitted because each generation accepted and reproduced the deeds of its fathers :

" There lives an old saw, framed in ancient days,  
In memories of men, that high estate,  
Full grown, brings forth its young, nor childless dies,  
But that from good success  
Springs to the race a woe insatiable.  
But I, apart from all,  
Hold this my creed alone :  
For impious act it is that offspring breeds  
Like to their parent stock."

He proclaims, as the burden of his prophecy, that

" Recklessness of old  
Is wont to breed another recklessness."—*Agam.*, 731-38.

The natural exultation of Pericles and his party, such as we find later in the Funeral Oration of Thuc. ii. 35-46, in the material prosperity and political greatness of Athens, is met with the

warning that all such prosperity is hollow and uncertain :

“ But Justice shineth bright  
In dwellings that are dark and dim with smoke,  
And honours life law-ruled,  
While gold-decked homes conjoined with hands defiled  
She with averted eyes  
Hath left, and draweth near  
To holier things, nor worships might of wealth,  
If counterfeit its praise.”—*Agam.*, 750.

“ Of high, o’erflowing health  
There is no limit fixed that satisfies ;  
For evermore disease, as neighbour close,  
Whom but a wall divides,  
Upon it presses, and man’s prosperous state  
Moves on its course, and strikes  
Upon an unseen rock.”—*Agam.*, 971.

All tendencies to new and more philosophical thoughts of the Gods than those of the Greek people, are repressed by the protest already quoted :

“ Weighing all other names, I fail to guess  
Aught else but Zeus, if I would cast aside  
Clearly, in very deed,  
From off my soul this weight of vaguest care.”  
—*Agam.*, 154.

The belief that man receives counsel and guidance from oracles and prophets, and in visions of the night, is again and again asserted. Loxias is

the prophet of his father Zeus, (*Eumen.* 19,) and the poet turns to

“ Zeus, who leadeth men in wisdom’s way,  
And fixeth fast the law  
That pain is gain ;  
And slowly dropping on the heart in sleep  
Comes woe-recording care,  
And makes the unwilling yield to wiser thoughts.”  
—*Agam.*, 170.

The belief that men incurred a guilt by deeds of violence and wrong, and yet could be cleansed from that guilt by rites of expiation, such as Epimenides had taught and practised, is the key-note, as has been already shown, both of the *Libation-Pourers* and the *Eumenides*. The very ceremonies of purification are dwelt on, like those of supplication, with a manifest delight. And, lastly, the whole scheme and interest of the trilogy culminates in the assertion, in the last play, of the divine authority of the Areiopagos. Personal gratitude for the help which the leading members of that court had given to the poet-prophet of their party in his hour of peril may have combined with his religious convictions to lead him to rush to the rescue when it too was imperilled. It is represented as instituted by the guardian Goddess of the State :

"This council I establish free from bribe,  
Reverend, and keen to act, for those that sleep  
An ever-watchful guardian of the land."

—*Eumen.*, 674.

Even the Argive alliance, as part of the policy of those who defended the jurisdiction of the Areiopagos, is dwelt on as that which shall

"Last as law for evermore."—*Eumen.*, 643.

It was, in part, owing to the earnestness which made the Oresteian trilogy the channel through which to utter the deepest convictions of his heart, that it rises to such a high pre-eminence over all the other works of Æschylos. But in part, also, that pre-eminence is due to the gradual ripening of powers that had at first been spasmodic and irregular in their action. The poet had profited even by the discipline of defeat, and had learnt some lessons from the higher finish and more conscious art of his younger rival.<sup>1</sup> Written at the age of sixty, and but three years before his death, the trilogy exhibits all his powers in their full perfection. There is a far deeper human interest, a fuller unfolding of human passions, than

<sup>1</sup> Such, *e.g.*, as the introduction of a third actor in the dialogues, more elaborate and expressive dances, the "pantomime" which told a tale without words, the buskin, and the masks which increased the volume of the voice.

we find in the *Persians*, the *Suppliants*, or the *Seven against Thebes*. While the "spectacle" element was not wanting, it was no longer the chief source of interest. Of all the earlier plays, the *Prometheus* is the only one which at all approaches to it in greatness, and that is but a fragment of a whole, requiring the two lost companion plays to enable us to judge fairly of its excellence. No character in any other can be compared with that of Clytæmnestra.

The actual result of the representation as a political movement was disappointing. It did not stop the action of the reforming party. The schemes of Ephialtes and Pericles were carried into effect, and the Areiopagos, though not abolished, lost something of its old power and more of its old glory. The introduction in the *Eumenides* of a chorus of the avenging Erinnyes, fifty in number, with masks of unequalled and horrible ugliness,—serpents twisted in their hair, blood dropping from their eyes, a red tongue projecting between their lips,—so startled the spectators that it was said to have sent children into fits and frightened women into miscarriage. Popular feeling was once more excited against him. The old charges were probably raked up. The poet of a failing party could not live harmoniously with the



Athenian *demos*. He left Athens soon after the date of the trilogy, never to return, and settled once more at Gela under the patronage of Hieron.

The three years that followed were spent in the fullest activity as a writer. To this period some have referred the repetition of the *Persians* and the composition of the *Woman of Ætna*, which have been assigned here to an earlier visit. He was, at all events, a welcome and an honoured guest. His death, if the account given be not mythical, was the result of a strange casualty. An eagle seized a tortoise and carried it off, dropped it that it might break the shell and get at the flesh, and it fell upon the head of Æschylos, as he was in the act of writing, and killed him on the spot. He was buried at Gela, and on his monument was placed an epitaph which, it was said, he had composed for himself, and which, in the absence of all mention of what the Sicilians most honoured in him, and the prominence given to what the poet looked on as the great glory of his life, has at least a strong internal presumption in favour of its genuineness:

“This tomb the dust of Æschylos doth hide,  
Euphorion’s son, and fruitful Gela’s pride;  
How tried his valour Marathon may tell,  
And long-haired Medes who knew it all too well.”

The Athenians showed their reverence for his memory by a decree, that any one who would undertake to represent his drama should be supplied with a grant from the public treasury to defray the cost.<sup>1</sup>

## II.—THE THEOLOGY OF ÆSCHYLOS.

The question, "What did this or that poet believe as to the will of God, the government of the universe, the destinies of mankind?" seems to a large school of critics an almost idle inquiry. "We are concerned," they say, "with the elements of perfection in his work, not with his opinions or beliefs. The function of the poet is that of the supreme artist, capable of sympathising with all fixed moods and passing impulses of man's nature, so far as to gain the power of reproducing them, and therefore with his religious affections among others. His own religious affections, if he have any, are nought to us. He is called to

‘ Sit apart, holding no form of creed,  
And contemplating all ;’

---

<sup>1</sup> It is argued, however, by Dahm, in his *De Vita Æschyli*, that this rather implies that the dramas were not popular enough to be performed without some such legislative protection.

to be many-sided, myriad-minded, as Shakspeare and Goethe were. Strong convictions, a definite creed, may have their value, in the formation of character or in various forms of action upon men; but as regards the poet's work, they are simply detrimental, tending, at the best, to a second-rate excellence, marring the fair bloom and exquisite beauty of the artist's workmanship, bringing it down to the level of hymns, or sermons in verse, or didactic morality."

The question thus raised is a wider one than can be adequately discussed now. It may be conceded that the power of entering into other forms of character, and therefore into other forms of religious belief than his own, is essential to the highest poetry, an indispensable condition of the drama or the dramatic idyll. But the critics who infer from this that the excellence of the poet varies inversely as the strength of his religious convictions, seem to forget—(1.) That this contemplation of many creeds, this power of dramatising the inner life of each, is only possible when the poet is the heir of many ages, and has himself lived through a manifold experience. It belongs to the latest period of national culture. One might almost speak of it as a symptom of national decay. It comes, when firm faith and strong

emotion, bounding joy and passionate hope, have died out ; and it is not easy to strike the balance of what has been lost and gained since the earlier days, when men sang and wrote because " their heart was hot within them," and at last the " fire kindled " and so they " spake with their tongue." If there be in the history of most nations a still earlier period, when their literature is more simply objective, when, as yet, their minds are not vexed with questions, it must be remembered that the second stage is the fruit of a progress upwards, of thoughts widening with the years ; and that, if there be a third and higher stage of excellence, it must be found in a combination of what was good in each, not by a mere return, or effort to return, to the first. (2.) They forget that many of the poems which have fixed themselves in men's hearts and memories—psalms, hymns, battle-songs—have been of the kind which they despise, the utterance of strong emotion having its root in very definite religious convictions. (3.) It is true that even of those who are most many-sided, and seem most creedless, that they preach a creed, that they are then at their highest point when they cease to bring before us the *dramatis personæ* of their ideal world, and utter something which they have felt intensely,

and therefore speak strongly. Even of Goethe, Browning, and Tennyson, we may say that the words of theirs which dwell most with men, are those which bring some message to them, offering, truly or falsely, some new apocalypse. If this is not true of the "*sovrano poeta*" of Greece, it is because he lived in that earliest stage of progress when the problems of life are hardly more felt by men than they are by a vigorous and healthy child, when even the widest sympathy could only bring him into contact with human passions, and could not draw within the range of his art, materials that were then non-existent. And of Shakspeare it is only true in part. If there is no utterance of religious conviction, there is, as has been often shown, a pervading reverence for the Christian life of England in the form which made it most conspicuously national.<sup>1</sup> And of some poets, whom no critic will venture to place on the lower level of the second class,—of the unknown author of the book of Job, of Lucretius, and Dante, and Milton,—it is conspicuously true, that their belief is part of their poetry; that they wrote poems to give utterance to it; that unless we understand it, the poems

<sup>1</sup> Comp. especially Archbishop Trench's *Sermon at the Stratford Festival*, and Bishop Wordsworth's *Shakspeare and the Bible*.

themselves are as a dead letter to us. Would those who bid us look only to the artistic perfection of the works of Sophocles and Æschylos, regard an inquiry into the teaching of the book of Job as to the divine government of the world, as beyond the province of true criticism?

And if we have already learnt to see, as we have seen in the case of Æschylos, that any given poet throws himself, with all the intensity of his nature, into the cause of one party against another in a great political controversy, if that controversy were inextricably blended with all the movements of thought, feeling, taste that affect men's inner as well as outer life, then we may well believe that his poetry would be pervaded by his religious convictions also. Even if they be regarded as a disturbing force, they must yet be taken into account, if we wish to understand the special excellences and the special defects of his genius. If authority were needed for such an inquiry into the theology of Æschylos, it might be found in the copious and interesting literature which has gathered round it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The mere titles would fill a page. I name, (1,) as most accessible to the English reader, Müller's *Dissertation on the Eumenides*; the chapters on the Greek Dramatists in Bunsen's *God in History*; Mr B. F. Westcott's masterly article on "Æschylos as a Religious Teacher," in the *Contemporary Review*

What we have seen then of this political action on the part of Æschylos will help us to estimate his position in relation to the religious history of Greece. We cannot place him with the great thinkers who, like Socrates and Plato, recognised the corrupting character of much of the current mythology, and would fain have banished it from their polity, who, in part at least, seem to stand forth as witnesses to the Divine unity, whose conformity with popular worship is but a tolerance of that which is imperfect, because the perfect is not yet come. His belief does not stand on the same level as the Theism of Anaxagoras, or the Pantheism or Atheism of Diagoras. When he speaks of the Gods, it is neither with the serenity of Sophocles, as looking to eternal laws that belong altogether to a different region of thought, nor with the ill-concealed Voltairian irony of Euripides. He is the Calderon, not the Goethe of Greek literature. He takes his thoughts of the

for Nov. 1866; to a paper by Mr Paley on "Chthonian Worship," in the *Journal of Philology* for June 1868; the sections bearing on this subject in A. W. Schlegel's *History of Dramatic Literature*, in Grote's and Thirlwall's *Histories of Greece*, in Müller and Donaldson's *History of Greek Literature*; and (2,) as worth consulting by those who have the opportunity, Klausen's *Theologumena Æschyli*; Dronke's *Die religiösen und sittlichen Vorstellungen des Æschylos und Sophokles*, and Nägelsbach's *Nachhomerische Theologie des Griechischen Volksglaubens*.

Gods from Homer and Hesiod—from the latter even more than the former—and (with some notable exceptions) abides by them. He is conservative in religion as in politics; looks with real alarm on the decay of reverence in the *demos* of Athens and among the young men of culture; would have sympathised, we may believe, with Aristophanes in his attack on Socrates as unsettling their minds; with Nikias in his respect for omens, his reverence for the dead, his shrinking from over-much prosperity; with the alarm and irritation caused by the mutilation of the Hermæ-busts, and the alleged profanation of the Mysteries;<sup>1</sup> perhaps even with those who condemned the “preacher of righteousness” who had dwelt among them to drink the hemlock.

He starts then with a belief that the myths of Greece represent the facts of the Divine history, and is not troubled by questions and doubts about them. Zeus reigns supreme, after having deposed Cronos, as Cronos had deposed Uranos:

“Nor He who erst was great,  
Full of the might to war,

---

<sup>1</sup> The fact that he had been himself charged with a like offence would not have made him less tolerant of an offence, the *animus* of which was, or seemed to him, so different from that which had actuated him.



Avails now : He is gone,  
And He who next came hath departed too,  
His victor meeting."—*Agam.*, 162-166.

The Titans rose against him in support of the old order, and he hurled them down to Tartaros, or buried them beneath volcanoes. The Olympian deities who reign under him with a limited jurisdiction, are his sons and daughters. He governs with inexorable severity ; just, but with little sympathy for the sufferings of mankind. Their progress towards knowledge and power and culture under the teaching of Prometheus is displeasing to him. He punishes the "philanthropy" of the more benevolent Titan by a penalty that is to last for ages. All this lay, however, in the remote past. In the age in which the Hellenes lived and acted, the deliverer of the Titan had come ; a vicarious death had freed him from his agony ;<sup>1</sup> there had been a solution of what seemed harsh and unjust in the government of Zeus. He looked on man with a more benignant eye. The worshipper could think of Him as no longer arbitrary in his chastisement. It is obvious that this recognition of a

<sup>1</sup> This is implied in the fact that the *Prometheus Unbound* was the third play of the trilogy, and that the mode of deliverance was found in the readiness of Cheiron to bear the penalty of death in Prometheus' stead, and so to work out a redemption for him.

Supreme Ruler over many Gods might clothe itself  
in lofty words, simulating almost the language of  
a monotheistic creed :

“ Safe, by no fall tripped-up,  
The full-wrought deed decreed by brow of Zeus :  
For dark and shadowed o'er  
The pathways of the counsels of His heart,  
And difficult to see.  
And from high-towering hopes He hurleth down  
To utter doom the heir of mortal birth ;  
Yet sets He in array  
No forces violent :  
All that God works is effortless and calm :<sup>1</sup>  
Seated on loftiest throne,  
Thence, though we know not how,  
He works His perfect will.”—*Suppl.*, 85-95.

Or this,—

“ O King of kings, and blest  
Above all blessed ones,  
And strength most mighty of the mightiest ;  
O Zeus of high estate,  
Hear this our prayer.”—*Ibid.*, 518-521.

Or this,—

“ He is our Father, author of our life,  
The King whose right hand worketh all His will,  
Our line's great Author, in His counsels deep  
Recording things of old,  
Directing all His plans, the great Work-master, Zeus.

---

<sup>1</sup> Comp. the recurrence of the same thought in the words of  
Apollo in *Eumen.*, ver. 620—

“ But all things else He turneth up and down,  
And orders without toil or weariness.”

For not, as suppliant sitting at the beck  
Of strength above his own,  
Reigns He subordinate to mightier powers,  
Nor does He pay His homage from below  
While one sits throned in majesty above :  
Act is for Him as speech  
To hasten what His teeming mind resolves."

—*Ibid.*, 584-590.

If *Fragm.* 293 be genuine, we have a yet clearer pantheistic, if not monotheistic creed :

"The air is Zeus, Zeus earth, and Zeus the heaven,  
Zeus all that is, and what transcends them all."

But with all this, the believing polytheist is still there. Artemis, Apollo, Hera, are to him real, not imaginary beings, each with a region of activity and a delegated sovereignty, as much as they were to Homer. The primary meaning of the myths of Hellas, as we explain them, as symbols of the changes of day and night, dawn and sunset, has for him passed away into the dim distance, and he sees it not. Attributes have become persons ; men's wandering fancies have crystallised and hardened. A change had come, however, over the religion of Greece since the Homeric age. It is inherent in the nature of Polytheism that a prominence is given to the worship, now of this deity, and now of that ; that new rites, symbols, mysteries, confraternities, rise up to meet the ever-restless

fears or fancies of men's hearts; that these come more or less into collision with each other. The story of the migration of Apollo from Delos to Delphi, of Orpheus and the mysteries which he founded, indicates a transition from the Homeric thought of the Sun, as slaying men with its arrows of pestilence, to that of the Giver of light, the Revealer of secrets, the Prophet of his father Zeus, (*Eumen.*, v. 19.) That of the travels of Dionysos, of the throng of Mænads who followed him, of the fate of Pentheus, and of Orpheus himself, indicates a struggle between the calmer and the more violent *cultus*,—between the inspiration which issues in wisdom and poetry, and that which shows itself in the abdication, by man's reason, of its sovereignty over his brute nature. And in this conflict, Æschylos, true to the influence of Epimenides,<sup>1</sup> is clearly on the side of the former. Frequent as are the appeals to Zeus, Apollo, Athena, it is noticeable that no single invocation of Dionysos is found in the extant plays. In the lost tetralogy of the *Lycurgeia*, which had the adventures of Dionysos for its subject, he seems to have brought in the death of Orpheus as the

<sup>1</sup> The Cretan prophet is described by Epiphanius, following some old tradition, as having been a priest of Mithras, the Persian analogue of Apollo.

servant of Apollo, a martyr in the cause of sun-worship.<sup>1</sup> Whether in that stage of his religious development the issue of the whole drama was a reconciliation of the conflicting powers, like that which we see in the *Eumenides*, and must assume in the *Prometheus Unbound*, is a question which we have not *data* to answer. In either case, the absence of the name of Dionysos from Æschylos, as compared with its prominence in Sophocles and Euripides, is striking and significant.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I take the following account of the play from an extract from Eratosthenes, given by Ahrens in his dissertation on the *Fragments* of Æschylos, (Didot., 1842.)

"But Orpheus paid no honour to Dionysos, holding the Sun, whom also he called Apollo, to be the greatest of the Gods. And rising up by night, before the earliest dawn, he was wont to go to the mountain called Pangæos, and there to wait for the sun, that he might look on him as he first rose. Wherefore Dionysos was wroth, and sent the Bassarid women against him," (analogous to the Mænads and Thyiads, which are more familiar names to us,) "as Æschylos the poet says, and they tore him in pieces, and cast out his limbs one by one. And the Muses gathered them together, and buried them in the place called Leibethra."

<sup>2</sup> Petersen, in an interesting monograph on *Die Delphische Festeyclus*, pp. 24, 25, urges that in the inner theology of Delphi, the contending claims had been reconciled mainly through the teaching of the Orphic confraternities, and that Zeus, Hades, Apollo, and Dionysos were all recognised for one and the self-same Power, manifesting itself in many ways. He refers especially to the strange treatise of Plutarch, *De EI apud Delphos*, as showing that Dionysos, Zagreus, Phœbos, Apollo,

With the same tendency in his choice among the "Gods many and Lords many" of the Greek Pantheon, we may note the prominence which he gives to the Chthonian as distinguished from the Olympian Gods, to those who dwell in darkness as contrasted with those who dwell in light. He turns to the worship of Demêter, as initiated, it may be, in the mysteries which had their local habitation in his native *deme*.<sup>1</sup> He dwells, with devoutest reverence on the thought, (speaking of Hades where the Chthonian Gods had their dwelling,) that

"There, as men relate, a second Zeus  
Judges men's evil deeds, and to the dead  
Assigns their last great penalties."—*Suppl.*, 226, 227.

So in like tone he speaks in the same play of

"The Avenger terrible,  
God that destroyeth, who not e'en in Hades  
Gives freedom to the dead."—*Ibid.*, 409, 410.

---

Aidoneus, were all manifestations of the Divine Unity, of which that mystic word was, as he interprets it, the symbol. With this we may compare the remarkable verse quoted by Justin Martyr, (*Cohort. ad Græc.*, c. 15,) as from Orpheus.

"There is one Zeus, one Hades, and one Sun,  
One Dionysos, yea, one God in all."

In all such passages, however, there is the risk of our transferring to an earlier age the Pantheistic speculations which were specially characteristic of the later periods of Greek thought.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. note on p. xv.

The same feeling leads him to dwell on the office of Hermes as the escort of the souls of the dead, and to introduce the spectres of the dead, as in the *Persians* and *Eumenides*, as actors in his plays. But above all other deities of darkness, he fastens on the Erinnyes as the ministers of divine vengeance,<sup>1</sup> at first terrible and wrathful, seeking nothing less than the life-blood of their victim, in conflict with Apollo as the God of light, cast out by Zeus, having no share in the banquet of Olympian Gods, but at last confining their work within the limits of what is required by the law of retribution, or is enough to deter others from crime, or to bring the offender to repentance. In some sense they are older and more venerable than Zeus himself :

“ This lot the all-pervading Destiny  
Hath spun to hold its ground for evermore,  
That we should still attend  
On him on whom there rests the guilt of blood  
Of kin shed causelessly.

—*Eumen.*, 320-21.

It is their task to do the work which would interfere with the calm bliss of the Olympian Gods.

<sup>1</sup> On this subject Müller's Treatise *On the Eumenides* is of special interest. The Erinyes are, as he interprets them, the personification of the passionate impulses of righteous wrath, which first burst out in curses, then work in acts of vengeance, then are tempered down into moral indignation against Evil.

At first their office seems simply terrible. The sins of the father are visited on the children to the third and fourth generation. An Atè cleaves to the house, thirsting for blood, breeding new evils, making sin at once the punishment of past and the parent of future sin, until at last the entail of curses is cut off by the purification of one on whom the inherited curse has fallen, and by the favour of the propitiated Gods. The Erinyes become the Eumenides—gentle, benignant, blessing. Panic terror passes into the awe and reverence without which there is no safety for the individual or the state. The law of retribution still remains,

“For unto them the lot is given  
All things human still to order;”

—*Eumen.*, 890.

but there is no longer any rivalry or antagonism :

“Dread and mighty,  
With the Undying is Erinnyes,  
And with Those beneath the earth too.”

—*Eumen.*, 910.

The prominence thus given to the representatives and agents of divine Vengeance shows the kind of questions which lay deepest in the poet's heart, and the answer which he had found for them. Was there a righteous government? Was the ruler of Gods and men capricious like the kings



of earth? Was He enslaved by some higher law of destiny, which moved on its way in a darkness that none could penetrate, and to which even He was subject? <sup>1</sup> It has often been said that this was the theory of the universe which Æschylos embraced, that the underlying thought in all Greek tragedy, and pre-eminently in his, is that of a curse cleaving causelessly to a given race, generation after generation, against which man struggles vainly, each effort to escape only riveting the chains more firmly. If any explanation is at hand of the dark mystery of evil, it is that prosperity, as such, makes men obnoxious to the jealous wrath of the Gods or of their ruler.

It would be far truer, I believe, to say that this is precisely the theory of the divine government

<sup>1</sup> The language in the *Prometheus*, vv. 519, 530, is apparently at variance with the sovereignty of Zeus. Necessity seems supreme over Zeus himself. He too cannot escape his destiny. What that destiny is, the Titan boasts that he knows, but will not utter. On the other hand, when questioned

“Who then directs Necessity’s career?”

His answer is,

“Fates triple-formed, Erinnyes unforgetting.”

And so far as we may think of this as not merely the boast of defiance put into the lips of the rebel, but expressing the poet’s own thoughts, we are thrown back upon his teaching as to the functions of those Erinnyes in the Oresteian trilogy, in which they appear as subordinate to, or at least in harmony with, the mind of Zeus.

which Æschylos lived to denounce and protest against. That it was one of the natural solutions of the problems presented by the strange chances and changes of life, that men who had come to think of God as even such an one as themselves might be led to accept it, is clear enough. It is the key-note of the theology of Herodotus.<sup>1</sup> "God is a jealous God," not in the Hebrew sense, as demanding all man's heart, but as envious of man's success, afraid of his independence, aiming his thunderbolts at the loftiest trees simply because they are the loftiest. Against such a theory the heart of Æschylos revolted. He craved for a *theodikæa*, and came forward in the spirit, one might almost say, of an *Athanasius contra mundum*, to attack the prevailing creed.

"There lives an old saw, framed in ancient days  
In memories of men, that high estate  
Full grown brings forth its young, nor childless dies,  
But that from good success  
Springs to the race a woe insatiable.  
But I, *apart from all,*  
*Hold this my creed, alone :*  
For impious act it is that offspring breeds,  
Like to their parent stock :  
For still in every house  
That loves the right, their fate for evermore  
Hath issue good and fair."—*Agam.*, 727-737.

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare Herod. i. 32 ; iii. 40 ; vii. 10, 46, 137.

If prosperity seemed to be followed by disaster, it was because men yielded to the temptations which it brought with it, and became wanton, haughty, reckless. The sequence of evils might always be traced to the fountain-head of some sin which might have been avoided, but which, once committed, went on with accelerating force. At every stage each evil act received its just recompense of reward, but that very recompense was brought about through the instrumentality of a fresh transgression waiting in its turn its punishment. The woes of Atreus' line, the curse that rested on the house of Œdipus, the misery of Troia, are all referred to a root-sin which remained unrepented and unatoned for. And the sins which presented themselves to the poet's mind as certain to be most fruitful in these transmitted curses, are those which offend against the primary relations of human fellowship. Murder, especially when the blood which has been shed is that of kindred ; lust, especially when it works regardless of the obligations that bind host to guest, and guest to host ; defiance of the Gods, as seen in impious speech or act, in surrendering suppliants or plundering temples,—these are the crimes for which the Erinnyes come as avengers. Zeus is, in a special sense, the God of the stranger, the God of host and guest,

the protector of those who flee to him for succour. At times we seem to be hearing the very echoes of a higher apocalypse of the truth. Æschylos proclaims in Greece, as Ezekiel had done on the banks of Chebar, that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die;" that men have no right to extend the law of retribution beyond the limits of justice, or to impute their own evil to the sins of their ancestors, or to the irresistible decrees of God. He too protests against the doctrine that "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and that the children's teeth are set on edge," (Ezek. xviii. 2-4).

It was indeed the defect of the teaching of Æschylos that it generalised too hastily, that he seemed to himself to have discovered the solution of all problems in the tangled web of human life. Like the friends of Job, it pressed its theory of retribution to the conclusion that all suffering implied guilt; that where prosperity ceased to smile on men, it was because they had forfeited their right to it. It was characteristic of Sophocles that, with a clearer appreciation of the truth, he brought into prominence the fact that there are phænomena which the theory does not explain, evils which seem to originate altogether in sins of ignorance, strange chances and changes which the theory of Nemesis, no less than that of the jealousy

of the Gods, fails to help us to explain. Not losing his faith in the Divine Righteousness, maintaining the eternal authority of the laws of Truth and Right, he is yet compelled to confess that there is much in the actual order of the world that is altogether incomprehensible. He balances the retributive theory of Æschylos as the teaching of *Ecclesiastes* balances that of Eliphaz the Temanite.

What is indicated with more or less distinctness in the change of name from the Erinnyes to Eumenides is brought out explicitly as one of the great laws of the divine government. The evils which follow on guilt may, rightly accepted, be an education. In the discipline of suffering, in the reproof of life, in the *παθήματα* which are also *μαθήματα*, men may find that which raises them out of recklessness, insolence, outrage, to "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," to all that the Hebrew meant by "wisdom," all that the Greek meant by *σωφροσύνη*. And this comes of God:

" 'Tis Zeus who leadeth men in wisdom's way,  
 And fixeth fast the law  
 That pain is gain ;  
 And slowly dropping on the heart in sleep  
 Comes crime-recording care,  
 And makes the unwilling yield to wiser thoughts."

—*Agam.*, 170-74.

"Justice turns the scales  
For those to whom through pain  
At last comes wisdom's gain."

—*Ibid.*, 241.

There are with whom 'tis well  
That awe should still abide  
As watchman o'er their souls :  
Calm wisdom gained by sorrow profits much."

—*Eumen.*, 491-94.

But with this recognition of a moral discipline by  
which men

"May rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things,"

there is also a consciousness, dim and dark, as of one groping after a truth which he feels rather than sees, that this is not enough. Whether the phenomenon be one of that parallelism in religious feeling which often meets us in races that have had no contact with each other, or be due to the influence of Semitic thought passing from Syria to the "isles of Chittim," and so through Epimenides to Greece, we need not now discuss. It is enough to note the fact that in the theology of Æschylos, as in the ritual which the Cretan prophet had introduced, and which was propagated by the Orphic and other mystic brotherhoods, the sufferer who groans under the burden of guilt needs, over and above the discipline of suffering and a life ruled by law, purification and atone-

ment; that the purification must be wrought by blood poured or sprinkled on the man who sought it; that he needs the mediation of another in order that the purification may be accomplished; that to render this office is the greatest kindness which friend can show to friend, or host to suppliant guest; that when this is done he may once more draw near, "with contrite heart," "harmless and pure," to the temples of the Gods.

One who took this belief of the world's history as manifesting God's righteous judgment—a belief every way analogous to that which is dominant in the Old Testament—would not be likely to look forward to a life after death as redressing the anomalies of the present, or compensating for its imperfections. But the consciousness of immortality was as strong in him as in the Hellenic race generally; stronger, it may be, than it was among the great body of the Jews. And with this conviction he can but look forward to that future as continuing and completing the retribution. There, in that other world, sits the "second Zeus," who awards to each man's deeds their final doom, (*Suppl.* v. 227.) There the kings and the great ones of the earth still retain something of their old prerogatives. Still they hold some fellowship with the living, feel shame and ignominy when funeral honours

are refused to them, can pass out of Hades where they dwell, to haunt and vex those who have wronged them, (as in the case of Clytæmnestra,) or be summoned by prayers and incantations (as are Agamemnon and Dareios) to help those whom they have loved.

And there, too, in that world of the dead, are the Erinnyes still carrying on their appointed task. There is no sleep of death for the doer of evil. They are

“A terror of the living and the dead.”—*Eumen.*, 312.

“Death sets not free from their attacks.”—*Ibid.*, 322.

“With the Undying is Erinnyes;  
And with Those beneath the earth too,  
And full clearly and completely  
Work they all things out for mortals,  
Giving these the songs of gladness,  
Those a life bedimmed with weeping.”

—*Ibid.*, 910-15.

Does the law of continuity hold good there also? Were the Erinnyes, as they did their work in the world of the dead, recognised even there as the Eumenides? Is the connexion between suffering and education, between “pain” and “gain,” projected into that other life? These questions lay then, as they lie now, behind the veil, shrouded in a mist and darkness which men seek in vain to penetrate. It may be that Æschylos felt that it



would be ill to lose either the vague terror or the wider hope. To them he gives no answer.

There remains yet one other of the problems of the world's history on which it is interesting to note what we find in the teaching of Æschylos. We ask the "whence?" as well as the "whither?" of the human race. How has it come to be as it is? Has it fallen from some paradise state, some Golden Age, each generation becoming feebler and more corrupt than its predecessors, or made its way onwards, through a long succession of ages, to its present culture, giving in that progress the pledge of yet further advancement? The former was the dominant idea in Greek legend. It was adopted by Hesiod (*Works and Days*, vv. 106-171), it took form in the mythos of Pandora, from whose fatal gifts all man's ills had come. But here, as in his theory of the divine law of retribution, Æschylos seems to strike out a new path for himself, and to anticipate, by a bold conjecture, conclusions that have been arrived at slowly, and after a long induction, by modern palæontologists:

" Like forms

Of phantom-dreams, through all their length of life,  
They muddled all at random ; did not know  
Houses of brick that catch the sunlight's warmth,

Nor yet the work of carpentry. They dwelt  
In hollowed holes, like swarms of tiny ants,  
In sunless depths of cavern ; and they had  
No certain signs of winter, nor of spring  
Flower-laden, nor of summer with her fruits ;  
But without counsel fared their whole life long."

—*Prom.*, 455-465.

It may be questioned whether Sir Charles Lyell or Sir John Lubbock could have given a better picture of the state of mankind in the so-called "stone period." And out of this they were raised by Prometheus, as the representative of a divine Wisdom sympathising with man's infirmities, becoming the "light that lighteth every man," at first in seeming antagonism to the Ruler of Heaven, but at last brought into entire harmony with that Supreme Will. The gift of fire came, and with it new capacities and new thoughts, a strange mastery over brute creatures and the brute elements of nature, like that on which Sophocles dwells in the memorable chorus of the *Antigone*—

"Many the things that strange and wondrous are,  
None stranger and more wonderful than man."

—*Antig.* v. 332.

In representing this as bringing down the wrath of Zeus on the beneficent Titan, Æschylos did but unconsciously embody on the one hand the law of sacrifice which has made all the great bene-

actors and teachers of mankind achieve their task, and win their victory through suffering; and on the other, the truth, that the first result of the possession and the consciousness of enlarged powers is a new self-assertion, the spirit of independence and rebellion against the control of a divine order, the "many inventions" that tend to evil, an outburst of impiety and lawlessness, needing the discipline of punishment before it can be brought round again into a nobler harmony. Men "become as Gods," and "their eyes are opened to discern good and evil," but it is to "know that they are naked," and to "eat bread in the sweat of their brow." During this process the government under which men live appears stern, arbitrary, tyrannical. The eagle's fangs rend the heart of the hero Titan who represents the intellect of mankind as a race, the mind that belongs to all, in its defiant self-assertion. The struggle and the agony must last till Cheiron comes of his own free will to bear the pains of death, and so deliver him.

With this, as being, as all thinkers have felt, among the noblest of the "unconscious prophecies of heathenism," among the profoundest anticipations of an eternal truth, in the form of a *mythos*, of which the writer felt rather than discerned the meaning, I close this present essay. Far as it has

been from an exhaustive treatment of a subject which might well claim a volume to itself, it may yet revive, I trust, in those who know Æschylos already, some recollections of what most interested them as they read, and answer some questions which that perusal raised ; and help those who enter on the study of his dramas for the first time, to do so with a better prospect of understanding and appreciating him.

---

## ADDENDUM.

Page xli. Note 2.—The two elegiac poems here given are identified with the Marathonian epitaphs by Stanley, in his *Notes on the Life of Æschylos*, with a “*facile crederem*,” (ii. p. 172) ; by Droysen, (ii. p. 302) ; and by Bunsen, (*God in History*, ii. p. 153), without any qualification. I agree, however, with Bode (*Geschichte des Hellenischen Dichtkunst*, ii. p. 262 ; iii. p. 215), in looking on the conjecture as very uncertain in either case. That ascribed to Æschylos seems to refer to some unrecorded act of heroism on the part of the Thessalians, and is indeed described in some MSS. as written for their warriors.—See Jacobs’ *Antholog. Græca*, notes on Book vii. 254, 255.



# AGAMEMNON. .

VOL. I.

A



## **Dramatis Personae.**

*Watchman.*

*Chorus of Argive Elders.*

**CLYTÆMNESTRA.**

*Herald, (TALTHYBIOS.)*

**AGAMEMNON.**

**CASSANDRA.**

**ÆGISTHOS.**

## ARGUMENT.

*Ten years had passed since Agamemnon, son of Atreus, king of Mykencæ, had led the Hellenes to Troia to take vengeance on Alexandros (also known as Paris), son of Priam. For Paris had basely wronged Menelaos, king of Sparta, Agamemnon's brother, in that, being received by him as a guest, he enticed his wife Helena to leave her lord and go with him to Troia. And now the tenth year had come, and Paris was slain, and the city of the Troians was taken and destroyed, and Agamemnon and the Hellenes were on their way homeward with the spoil and prisoners they had taken. But meanwhile Clytæmnestra too, Agamemnon's queen, had been unfaithful, and had taken as her paramour Ægisthos, son of that Thyestes whom Atreus, his brother, had made to eat, unknowing, of the flesh of his own children. And now, partly led by her adulterer, and partly seeking to avenge the death of her daughter Iphigeneia, whom Agamemnon had sacrificed to appease the wrath of Artemis, and partly also jealous because he was bringing back Cassandra, the daughter of Priam, as his concubine, she plotted with Ægisthos against her husband's life. But this was done secretly, and she stationed a guard on the roof of the royal palace to give notice when he saw the beacon-fires, by which Agamemnon had promised that he would send tidings that Troia was taken.\**

\* The unfaithfulness of Clytæmnestra and the murder of Agamemnon had entered into the Homeric cycle of the legends of the house of Atreus. In the *Odyssey*, however, Ægisthos is the chief agent in this crime, (*Odys.* iii. 264, iv. 91, 532, xi. 409); and the manner of it differs from that which Æschylos has adopted. Clytæmnestra first appears as slaying both her husband and Cassandra in Pindar (*Pyth.* xi. 26.)



Digitized by Google

## AGAMEMNON.

---

SCENE—Argos. *The palace of AGAMEMNON ; statues of the Gods in front. Watchman on the roof. Time, night.*

*Watchman.* I ask the Gods a respite from these toils,  
This keeping at my post the whole year round,  
Wherein, upon the Atreidæ's roof reclined,  
Like dog, upon my elbow, I have learnt  
To know the company of stars of night,  
And those bright lords that deck the firmament,  
And winter bring to men, and harvest-tide ;  
[The rising and the setting of the stars.]  
And now I watch for sign of beacon-torch,  
The flash of fire that bringeth news from Troïa,  
And tidings of its capture. So prevails  
\* A woman's manly-purposed, hoping heart ;  
And when I keep my bed of little ease,  
Drenched with the dew, unvisited by dreams,  
(For fear, instead of sleep, my comrade is,  
So that in sound sleep ne'er I close mine eyes,)  
And when I think to sing a tune, or hum,  
(My medicine of song to ward off sleep.)

Then weep I, wailing for this house's chance,  
 No more, as erst, right well administered.  
 Well! may I now find blest release from toils,  
 When fire from out the dark brings tidings good.

*[Pauses, then springs up suddenly, seeing a light  
 in the distance.]*

Hail! thou torch-bearer of the night, that shedd'st  
 Light as of morn, and bringest full array  
 Of many choral bands in Argos met,  
 Because of this success. Hurrah! hurrah!  
 So clearly tell I Agamemnon's queen,  
 With all speed rising from her couch to raise  
 A cry of triumph o'er this beacon-fire  
 Throughout the house, since Ilion's citadel  
 Is taken, as full well that bright blaze shows.  
 And I, yes, I myself, will dance a prelude;

*[Leaps and dances.]*

For I shall score my lord's new turn of luck,  
 This beacon-blaze my throw of triple six.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The form of gambling from which the phrase is taken, had clearly become common in Attica among the class to which the watchman was supposed to belong, and had given rise to proverbial phrases like that in the text. The Greeks themselves supposed it to have been invented by the Lydians, (Herod. i. 94,) or Palamedes, one of the heroes of the tale of Troy, but it enters also into Egyptian legends (Herod. ii. 122,) and its prevalence from remote antiquity in the farther East, as in the Indian story of Nala and Damayanti, makes it probable that it originated there. The game was commonly played, as the phrase shows, with three dice, the highest throw being that which gave three sixes. Æschylos, it may be noted, appears in a lost drama, which bore the title of "Palamedes," to have brought the game itself into his plot. It is referred to, as invented by that hero, in a fragment of Sophocles, (Fr. 380.) and again in the proverb,—

"The dice of Zeus have ever lucky throws."—(Fr. 763.)

Heaven grant that I with this mine hand may touch  
The dear hand of our king when he comes home !.

As to all else, the word is " Hush ! " An ox <sup>1</sup>  
Rests on my tongue ; the house itself would tell  
Full clear, had it a voice. I 'm fain to speak  
To those who know, forget with those who know not.

[Exit.

[Enter Chorus of Argive elders, chanting as they  
march to take up their position on the centre  
of the stage. A procession of women bearing  
torches is seen in the distance.

Lo ! the tenth year now is passing 40  
Since, of Priam great avengers,  
Menelaos, Agamemnon,  
Double-throned and double-sceptred,  
Power from sovran Zeus deriving—  
Mighty pair of the Atreidæ—  
Raised a fleet of thousand vessels  
Of the Argives from our country,  
Potent helpers in their warfare,  
Shouting cry of Ares fiercely,  
E'en as vultures shriek who hover,  
Wheeling, whirling o'er their eyrie, 50  
In wild sorrow for their nestlings,  
With their oars of stout wings rowing,

<sup>1</sup> Here, also, the watchman takes up another common proverbial phrase, belonging to the same group as that of "kicking against the pricks" in v. 1624. He has his reasons for silence, weighty as would be the tread of an ox to close his lips.

Having lost the toil that bound them  
 To their callow fledgelings' couches.  
 But some high God,—or Apollo,  
 Zeus, or Pan,—the shrill cry hearing,  
 Cry of birds that are his clients,<sup>1</sup>  
 Sendeth forth on men transgressing  
 Erinnyes, slow but sure avenger ;  
 So against young Alexandros<sup>2</sup>  
 Atreus' sons the great King sendeth,  
 Zeus, of host and guest protector :  
 He, for bride with many a lover,  
 Will to Danai give and Trojans  
 Many wrestlings, sinews-trying,  
 When the knee in dust is crouching,  
 And the spear-shaft in the prelude  
 Of the battle snaps asunder.  
 But as things are now, so are they,  
 So, as destined, shall the end be.  
 Nor by bitter tears in secret,  
 Nor by secret full libations,  
 Shall he soothe the wrath unbending  
 Caused by sacred rites left fireless.<sup>3</sup>  
 We, with old frame little honoured,

60

70

<sup>1</sup> The vultures stand, i.e., to the rulers of Heaven, in the same relation as the foreign sojourners in Athens, the *Metoece*, did to the citizens under whose protection they placed themselves.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandros, the other name of Paris, the seducer of Helen.

<sup>3</sup> The words, perhaps, refer to the grief of Menelaos, as leading him to neglect the wonted sacrifices to Zeus, but it seems better to see in them a reference to the sin of Paris. He, at least, who had carried off his host's wife, had not offered acceptable sacrifices, had neglected all sacrifices to

Left behind that host are staying,  
 Resting strength like that of childhood's  
 On our staff: for in the bosom  
 ° Of the boy, as monarch reigning,  
 Life's young sap but old age equals;  
 Ares not as yet keeps guard there:  
 And the man in age exceeding,  
 When the leaf is sere and withered,  
 Goes with three feet on his journey;<sup>1</sup>  
 Not more Ares-like than boyhood,  
 Like a day-seen dream he wanders.

80

[Enter CLYTÆMNESTRA, followed by the procession  
 of torch-bearers.]

But thou, of Tyndareus the daughter,  
 Queen of Argos, Clytæmnestra,  
 What has happened? what news cometh?  
 What perceiving, on what tidings  
 Leaning, dost thou put in motion  
 All this solemn, great procession?  
 Of the Gods who guard the city,  
 All that dwell in light or darkness,  
 Of the heaven, and of the market,  
 Lo! with thy gifts blaze the altars;  
 And through all the expanse of Heaven,  
 Here and there, the torch-fire rises,

90

Zeus Xenios, the God of host and guest. The allusion to the sacrifice of Iphigenia, which some have found here, and the wrath of Clytæmnestra, which Agamemnon will fail to soothe, seems more far-fetched.

<sup>1</sup> An allusion, such as the audience would catch and delight in, to the well-known enigma of the Sphinx. See Sophocles, (*Trans.*) p. 1.

With the flowing, pure persuasion  
 Of the holy unguent nourished,  
 \* And the chrism rich and kingly  
 From the treasure-store's recesses.  
 Telling what of this thou canst tell,  
 What is right for thee to utter,  
 Be a healer of my trouble,  
 Trouble now my soul disturbing,  
 \* While anon fond hope displaying  
 Sacrificial signs propitious,  
 Wards off anxious care unsated,  
 Sorrow mind and heart corroding.

100

[*The Chorus, taking their places round the central  
 thymele, begin their song.*<sup>1</sup>

## STROPHE.

Able am I to utter, setting forth  
 The might from omens sprung,  
 \* What met the heroes as they journeyed on,  
 (For still, by God's great gift,  
 My age, yet linked with strength,  
 \* Breathes suasive power of song,)

<sup>1</sup> The Chorus, though too old to take part in the expedition, are yet able to tell both of what passed as the expedition started, and of the terrible fulfilment of the omens which they had seen. The two eagles are, of course, in the symbolism of prophecy, the two chieftains, Menelaos and Agamemnon. The "white feathers" of the one may point to the less heroic character of Menelaos: so, in v. 123, they are of "diverse mood." The hare whom they devour is, in the first instance, Troia, and so far the omen is good, portending the success of the expedition; but, as Artemis hates the fierceness of the eagles, so there is, in the eyes of the seer, a dark token of danger from her wrath against the Atreidæ. Either their victory will be sullied by cruelty which will bring down vengeance, or else there is some secret sin in

How the Achæans' twin-throned majesty,  
 Accordant sovereigns of the youth of Hellas, 110  
     With spear and vengeful hand,  
 Were sent by fierce, strong bird 'gainst Teucrian shore,  
 King of the birds to kings of ships appearing,  
     One black, with white tail one,  
 Near to the palace, on the spear-hand side,  
     On station seen of all,  
 A pregnant hare devouring with her young,  
     Robbed of all runs to come :  
 Wail as for Linos, wail, wail bitterly,  
     And yet may good prevail !<sup>1</sup> 120

ANTISTROPHE.

And the wise prophet of the army seeing  
     The brave Atreidæ twain  
 Of diverse mood, knew those that tore the hare,

the past which must be atoned for by a terrible sacrifice. In the legend followed by Sophocles, (*Electr.* 566,) Agamemnon had offended Artemis by slaying a doe sacred to her, as he was hunting. In the manifold meanings of such omens there is, probably, a latent suggestion of the sacrifice of Iphigenia by the two chieftains, though this was at the time hidden from the seer. The fact that they are seen on the right, not on the left hand, was itself ominous of good.

<sup>1</sup> The song of Linos, originally the dirge with which men mourned for the death of Linos, the minstrel-son of Apollo and Urania, brother of Orpheus, who was slain by Heracles,—a type, like Thammuz and Adonis, of life prematurely closed and bright hopes never to be fulfilled,—had come to be the representative of all songs of mourning. So Hesiod, (in Eustath. on *Hom.* *Il.*, vii, 569) speaks of the name, as applied to all funeral dirges over poets and minstrels. So Herodotos (*ii.* 79) compares it, as the type of this kind of music among the Greeks, with what he found in Egypt connected with the name of Maneros, the only son of the first king of Egypt, who died in the bloom of youth. The name had, therefore, as definite a connotation for a Greek audience as the words *Miserere* or *Jubilate* would have for us, and ought not, I believe, to disappear from the translation.



## *Agamemnon.*

and those that led the host ;  
 and thus as augur spake :  
 One day this armament  
 Priam's city sack, and all the herds  
 by the people, countless, by the towers,  
 ate shall with force lay low.  
 Take heed lest any wrath of Gods  
 the great curb of Troia yet encamped,  
 truck down before its time ;  
 temis the chaste that house doth hate,  
 er father's wingèd hounds,  
 lay the mother with her unborn young,  
 and loathes the eagles' feast.  
 s for Linos, wail, wail bitterly ;  
 and yet may good prevail !

### EPODE.

he, the fair One, though so kind of heart  
 fresh-dropt dew from mighty lion's womb,<sup>1</sup>  
 and young that suck the teats  
 f all that roam the fields,  
 Yet prays Him bring to pass  
 the portents of those birds,  
 mens good yet also full of dread.  
 and Pæan I invoke  
 aler, lest she on the Danai send

comparison of a lion's whelps to dew-drops, bold as the figure is,  
 thing in it analogous to that with which we are more familiar, de-  
 the children, or the army of a king, as the "dew" from "the  
 the morning."—Ps. cx. 3.

130

*Defa*  
*Long*  
 So urging  
*Unbles*  
 By natural g  
 Bearing far ot  
 For there  
 Fearful, re  
 Ruling the hou  
 Vengeance  
 Such things, wit  
 In voice tha  
 As destined by t  
 To this our  
 And in accor  
 Wail as for Linos,  
 And yet may

O Zeus—w

<sup>1</sup> The sacrifice, *i.e.*, was  
 toary ritual, form a feast

<sup>2</sup> The dark words look ad  
 sons of Thyestes, forward,  
 of Iphigenia.

<sup>3</sup> As a part of the drama  
 the Chorus that in this their  
 no other name, but that of t  
 that they have a meaning be  
 his own theology. In the se  
 now know of it) he had repr  
 sovereignty, the representati  
 also could not love, inflicting  
 he has grown wiser. The so

Delays that keep the ships  
 Long time with hostile blasts,  
 So urging on a new, strange sacrifice,  
 Unblest, unfestivalled,<sup>1</sup>  
 By natural growth artificer of strife,  
 Bearing far other fruit than wife's true fear ;  
 For there abideth yet,  
 Fearful, recurring still,  
 Ruling the house, full subtle, unforgetting,  
 Vengeance for children slain." <sup>2</sup> 150  
 Such things, with great good mingled, Calchas spake,  
 In voice that pierced the air,  
 As destined by the birds that crossed our path  
 To this our kingly house ;  
 And in accord with them,  
 Wail as for Linos, wail, wail bitterly ;  
 And yet may good prevail.

STROPH. I.

O Zeus—whate'er He be,<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> The sacrifice, i.e., was to be such as could not, according to the customary ritual, form a feast for the worshippers.

<sup>2</sup> The dark words look at once before and after, back to the murder of the sons of Thyestes, forward, though of this the seer knew not, to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia.

<sup>3</sup> As a part of the drama the whole passage that follows is an assertion by the Chorus that in this their trouble they will turn to no other God, invoke no other name, but that of the Supreme Zeus. But it can hardly be doubted that they have a meaning beyond this, and are the utterance by the poet of his own theology. In the second part of the Promethean trilogy (all that we now know of it) he had represented Zeus as ruling in the might of despotic sovereignty, the representative of a Power which men could not resist, but also could not love, inflicting needless sufferings on the sons of men. Now he has grown wiser. The sovereignty of Zeus is accepted as part of the pre-

If that Name please Him well,  
 By that on Him I call :  
 Weighing all other names I fail to guess  
 Aught else but Zeus, if I would cast aside,  
 Clearly, in very deed,  
 From off my soul this weight of vaguest care.

160

## ANTISTROPH. I.

Nor He who erst was great,<sup>1</sup>  
 Full of the might to war,  
 ° Avails now ; He is gone ;  
 And He who next came hath departed too,  
 His victor meeting ; but if one should hymn  
 The conqueror Zeus with zeal,  
 His shall be all the wisdom of the wise ;

## STROPH. II.

Yea, Zeus, who leadeth men in wisdom's way,  
 And fixeth fast the law,  
 Wisdom by pain to gain ;  
 And slowly dropping on the heart in sleep

170

sent order of the world ; trust in Him brings peace ; the pain which He permits is the one only way to wisdom. The stress laid upon the name of Zeus implies a wish to cleave to the religion inherited from the older Hellenes, as contrasted with those with which their intercourse with the East had made the Athenians familiar. Like the voice which came to Epimenides, as he was building a sanctuary to the Muses, bidding him dedicate it not to them but to Zeus, (Diog. Laert. i. 10,) it represents a faint approximation to a truer, more monotheistic creed than that of the popular mythology.

<sup>1</sup> The two mighty ones who have passed away are Uranos and Cronos, the representatives in Greek mythology of the earlier stages of the world's history, (1) mere material creation, (2) an ideal period of harmony, a golden, Saturnian age, preceding the present order of divine government with its mingled good and evil. Comp. Hesiod. *Theogon.* 459.

Comes crime-recording care,  
And makes the unwilling yield to wiser thoughts :  
And doubtless this too comes from grace of Gods,  
° Seated in might upon their awful thrones.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

And thus of those Achæan ships the chief,  
The elder one, no blame  
Casting on any seer,  
But tempered to the fate that on him smote. . . . 180  
When that Achæan host  
Were vexed with adverse winds and failing stores,  
Still kept where Chalkis in the distance lies,  
And the vexed waves in Aulis ebb and flow ;

## STROPH. III.

And breezes from the Strymon sweeping down,  
Breeding delays and hunger, driving forth  
Our men in wandering course,  
On seas without a port,  
Sparing nor ships, nor rope, nor sailing gear,  
With doubled months wore down the Argive host ; 190  
And when for that wild storm  
Another charm far harder for our chiefs  
The prophet spake, and uttered " Artemis,"<sup>1</sup>  
In tone that pierced the air,  
The Atreidæ smote their staves upon the ground,  
And could not stay their tears.

<sup>1</sup> The seer saw his augury fulfilled. When he uttered the name of Artemis it was pregnant with all the woe which he had foreboded at the outset.

## ANTISTROPH. III.

And then the old king lifted up his voice,  
And spake, " Hard fate it is to disobey ;

Hard too to slay my child,

20

The pride and joy of home,

Polluting with the streams of maiden's blood

Her father's hands upon the altar steps.

What course is free from ill ?

How lose my ships and fail of mine allies !

'Tis meet with strong desire to seek a rite

That shall the storm-winds soothe,

E'en though it be with blood of maiden pure ;

May all end well at last ! "

210

## STROPH. III.

So when he himself had harnessed

To the yoke of Fate unbending, *for*

With a blast of strange, new feeling,

Sweeping o'er his heart and spirit,

Aweless, godless, and unholy,

He his thoughts and purpose altered

To full measure of all daring,

(Still base counsel's fatal frenzy,

Wretched primal source of evils,

Gives to mortal hearts strange boldness,)

And at last his heart did harden

To slay his daughter as a victim,

Help in war for woman guilty,

Victim for the good ships' safety.

## ANTISTROPH. III.

All her prayers and eager callings  
On the tender name of Father,  
All her young and maiden freshness,  
They but set at nought, those rulers,  
In their passion for the battle.  
And her father gave commandment  
To the servants of the Goddess,  
When the prayer was o'er to lift her,  
Like a kid, above the altar,  
In her garments wrapt, face downwards,—<sup>1</sup>  
Yea, to seize with all their courage,  
And that o'er her lips of beauty  
Should be set a watch to hinder  
Words of curse against the houses,  
With the gag's strength silence-working.<sup>2</sup>

## STROPH. IV.

And she upon the ground  
Pouring rich folds of robes in saffron dyed,  
Cast at each one of those who sacrificed  
A piteous glance that pierced,  
Seen like a pictured form ; <sup>3</sup>  
And wishing,—all in vain,—  
To speak ; for oftentimes

<sup>1</sup> So that the blood might fall upon the altar, as the knife was drawn across the throat.

<sup>2</sup> The whole passage should be compared with the magnificent description in Lucretius i. 84-101.

<sup>3</sup> Beautiful as a picture, and as motionless and silent also. The art, young as it was, had already reached the stage when it supplied to the poet an ideal standard of perfection. Other allusions to it are found in vv. 774, 1300.

In those her father's hospitable halls  
 She sang, a maiden pure with chastest song,  
     \* And her dear father's life  
 That poured its threefold cup of praise to God,<sup>1</sup>  
     Crowned with all choicest good,  
 She with a daughter's love  
 Was wont to celebrate.

## ANTISTROPH. IV.

What then ensued mine eyes  
 Saw not, nor may I tell, but Calchas' arts  
 Were found not fruitless. Justice turns the scale 240  
     For those to whom through pain  
     At last comes wisdom's gain.  
     \* But for our future fate,  
     \* Since help for it is none,  
 \* Good-bye to it before it comes, and this  
 Has the same end as wailing premature,  
     For with to-morrow's dawn  
 It will come clear; may good luck crown our fate!  
     So prays the one true guard,  
     Nearest and dearest found,  
     Of this our Apian land.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The words point to the ritual of Greek feasts, which assigned the first libation to Zeus and the Olympian Gods, the second to the Heroes, the third to Zeus in his special character as Saviour and Preserver; the last was commonly accompanied by a pæan, hymn of praise. The life of Agamemnon is described as one which had good cause to offer many such libations. Iphigeneia had sung many such pæans.

<sup>2</sup> The mythical explanation of this title for the Argive territory is found in the Suppl. v. 256, and its real meaning will be discussed in a note on that passage.

*The Chief of the Chorus turns to CLYTÆMNESTRA, and  
her train of handmaids.*

*Chor.* I come, O Clytæmnestra, honouring  
Thy majesty : 'tis meet to pay respect  
To a chief's wife, the man's throne empty left : 250  
But whether thou hast heard good news, or else  
In hopes of tidings glad dost sacrifice,  
I fain would hear, yet will not silence blame.

*Clytæm.* May Morning, as the proverb runs, appear  
Bearing glad tidings from his mother Night ;<sup>1</sup>  
Joy thou shalt learn beyond thy hope to hear ;  
For Argives now have taken Priam's city.

*Chor.* What ? Thy words sound so strange they flit  
by me.

*Clytæm.* The Achæans hold Troïa. Speak I clear  
enough ? 260

*Chor.* Joy creeps upon me, drawing forth my tears.

*Clytæm.* Of loyal heart thine eyes give token true.

*Chor.* What witness sure hast thou of these events ?

*Clytæm.* Full clear (how else ?) unless the God de-  
ceive.<sup>2</sup>

*Chor.* Reliest thou on dreams or visions seen ?

<sup>1</sup> To speak of Morning as the child of Night was, we may well believe, among the earliest parables of nature. In its mythical form it appears in Hesiod., (*Theogon.* 123,) but its traces are found wherever, as among Hebrews, Athenians, Germans, men reckoned by nights rather than by days, and spoke of "the evening and the morning" rather than of "day and night."

<sup>2</sup> The God thought of is, as in v. 272, Hephæstos, as being Lord of the Fire, that had brought the tidings.



*Clytæm.* I place no trust in mind weighed down with sleep.<sup>1</sup>

*Chor.* Hath then some wingless omen charmed thy soul?<sup>2</sup>

*Clytæm.* My mind thou scorn'st, as though 'twere but a girl's.

*Chor.* What time has passed since they the city sacked?

*Clytæm.* This very night, the mother of this morn. <sup>370</sup>

*Chor.* What herald could arrive with speed like this?

*Clytæm.* Hephæstos flashing forth bright flames from  
Ida:

Beacon to beacon from that courier fire  
Sent on its tidings; Ida to the rock<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is not without significance that Clytæmnestra scorns the channel of divine instruction of which the Chorus had spoken with such reverence. The dramatist puts into her mouth the language of those who scoffed at the notion that truth might come to the soul in "visions of the night," when "deep sleep falleth upon men." So Sophocles puts like thoughts into the mouth of Jocasta, (*Œd. King*, vv. 709, 858.)

<sup>2</sup> Omens came from the flight of birds. An omen which was not trustworthy, or belonged to some lower form of divination, might therefore be spoken of as wingless. But the word may possibly be intensive, not negative, "swift-winged," and then refer generically to that form of divination.

<sup>3</sup> The description that follows, over and above its general interest, had, probably, for an Athenian audience, that of representing the actual succession of beacon-stations, by which they, in the course of the wars under Pericles, had ~~actually received~~ intelligence from the coasts of Asia. A glance at the map will show the fitness of the places named—Ida, Lemnos, Athos, Makistos, (a mountain in Eubœa,) Messapion, (on the coast of Bœotia,) over the plains of the Asôpos to Kithæron, in the south of the same province, then over Gorgopis, a bay of the Corinthian Gulf, to Ægiplanctos in Megaris, then across to a headland overlooking the Saronic Gulf, to the Arachnæan hill in Argolis. The word "*courier-fire*" connects itself also with the system of posts or messengers, which the Persian kings seem to

Hermæan named, in Lemnos : from the isle  
The height of Athos, dear to Zeus, received  
A third great torch of flame, and, lifted up,  
So as on high to skim the broad sea's back,  
The stalwart fire rejoicing went its way ;  
The pine-wood, like a sun, sent forth its light  
Of golden radiance to Makistos' watch ;  
And he, with no delay, nor unawares  
Conquered by sleep, performed his courier's part :  
Far off the torch-light, to Euripos' straits  
Advancing, tells it to Messapion's guards :  
They, in their turn, lit up and passed it on,  
Kindling a pile of dry and aged heath.  
Still strong and fresh the torch, not yet grown dim,  
Leaping across Asôpos' plain, in guise  
Like a bright moon, towards Kithæron's rock,  
Roused the next station of the courier flame.  
And that far-travelled light the sentries there  
Refused not, burning more than all yet named :  
And then the light swooped o'er Gorgôpis' lake,  
And passing on to Ægiplanctos' mount,  
Bade the bright fire's due order tarry not ;  
And they, enkindling boundless store, send on  
A mighty beard of flame, and then it passed  
The headland e'en that looks on Saron's gulf,  
Still blazing. On it swept, until it came

280

290

have been the first to organise, and which impressed the minds both of Hebrews, (Esth. viii. 14,) and Greeks, (Herod. viii. 98,) by their regular transmission of the king's edicts, or of special news.

To Arachnæan heights, the watch-tower near ;  
 Then here on the Atreidæ's roof it swoops,  
 This light, of Ida's fire no doubtful heir.  
 Such is the order of my torch-race games ;  
 One from another taking up the course,<sup>1</sup>  
 But here the winner is both first and last ;  
 And this sure proof and token now I tell thee,  
 Seeing that my lord hath sent it me from Troia.

320

*Chor.* I to the Gods, O Queen, will pray hereafter,  
 But fain would I hear all thy tale again,  
 E'en as thou tell'st, and satiate my wonder.

310

*Clytæm.* This very day the Achæans Troia hold.

<sup>1</sup> Our ignorance of the details of the *Lampadephoria*, or "torch-race games," in honour of the fire-God, Prometheus, makes the allusion to them somewhat obscure. As described by Pausanias, (I. xxx. 2,) the runners started with lighted torches from the altar of Prometheus in the *Academeia* and ran towards the city. The first who reached the goal with his torch still burning became the winner. If all the torches were extinguished, then all were losers. As so described, however, there is no succession, no taking the torch from one and passing it on to another, like that described here and in the well-known line of Lucretius, (ii. 78.)

"Et quasi cursores vitæ lampada tradunt."

(And they, as runners, pass the torch of life.)

On the other hand, there are descriptions which show that such a transfer was the chief element of the game. This is, indeed, implied both in this passage and in the comparison between the game and the Persian courier-system in Herod. viii. 98. The two views may be reconciled by supposing (1) that there were sets of runners, vying with each other as such, rather than individually, or (2) that a runner whose speed failed him though his torch kept burning, was allowed to hand it on to another who was more likely to win the race, but whose torch was out. The next line seems meant to indicate where the comparison failed. In the torch-race which *Clytæmnestra* describes there had been no contest. One and the self-same fire (the idea of succession passing into that of continuity) had started and had reached the goal, and so had won the prize.

I trow full diverse cry pervades the town :  
 Pour in the same vase vinegar and oil,  
 \* And you would call them enemies, not friends ;  
 And so from conquerors and from captives now  
 'The cries of varied fortune one may hear.  
 For these, low-fallen on the carcases  
 Of husbands or of brothers, children too  
 By aged fathers, mourn their dear ones' death,  
 And that with throats that are no longer free. 320  
 And those the hungry toil of night-long guard,  
 After the battle, at their breakfast sets ;  
 Not billeted in order fixed and clear,  
 But just as each his own chance fortune grasps,  
 They in the captive houses of the Troïans  
 Dwell, freed at last from all the night's chill frosts,  
 And dews of Heaven, for now, poor wretches, they  
 Will sleep all night without the sentry's watch ;  
 And if they reverence well the guardian Gods  
 Of that new-conquered country, and their shrines, 330  
 Then they, the captors, will not captured be.  
 Ah ! let no evil lust attack the host  
 Conquered by greed, to plunder what they ought not :  
 For yet they need return in safety home,  
 Doubling the goal to run their backward race.<sup>1</sup>  
 \* But should the host come sinning 'gainst the Gods,

<sup>1</sup> The complete foot-race was always to the column which marked the end of the course, round it, and back again. In getting to Troia, therefore, but half the race was done.

Then would the curse of those that perishèd  
 Wake, e'en though sudden evils might not fall.  
 Such thoughts are mine, mere woman though I be.  
 May good prevail beyond all doubtful chance !  
 For I have got the blessing of great joy.

340

*Chor.* Thou, lady, kindly, like a sage, dost speak,  
 And I, on hearing thy sure evidence  
 Prepare myself to give the Gods due thanks ;  
 For they have wrought full meed for all our toil.

[*Exit CLYTEM. with her train.*]

O Zeus our King ! O Night belovèd,  
 Of great glories mighty winner,  
 Who upon the towers of Troïa  
 Casted'st snare of closest meshes,  
 So that none full-grown or youthful  
 Could o'erleap the net of bondage,  
 Woe of universal capture ;—  
 Zeus, of host and guest protector,  
 Who hath wrought these things, I worship ;  
 He long since on Alexandros  
 Stretched his bow that so his arrow  
 Might not sweep at random, missing,  
 Or beyond the stars shoot upwards.

350

STROPH. I.

Yes, one may say, 'tis Zeus whose blow they feel ;  
 This one may clearly trace :  
 They fared as He decreed :  
 Yea, one there was who said

360

*Jan*

"The Gods deign not to care for mortal men <sup>1</sup>

By whom the grace of things inviolable

Is trampled under foot."

No fear of God had he :

\* Now is it to the children manifest <sup>2</sup>

Of those who, overbold,

Breathed rebel War beyond the bounds of Right,

Their houses overfilled with precious store

\* Above the golden mean.

\* Ah ! let our lot be free from all that hurts,

370

So that the wise of heart

May ward it off from him,

That it may be enough

Right-judging heart to gain.

Since still there is no bulwark strong in wealth

Against destruction's doom,

For one who in the pride of wantonness

Spurns the great altar of the Right and Just.

<sup>1</sup> Dramatically the words refer to the practical impiety of evildoers like Paris, with, perhaps, a half-latent allusion to that of Clytæmnestra. But it can hardly be doubted that for the Athenian audience it would have a more special significance, as a protest against the growing scepticism, what in a later age would have been called the Epicureanism, of the age of Pericles. It is the assertion of the belief of Æschylos in the moral government of the world. The very vagueness of the singular, "One there was," would lead the hearers to think of some teacher like Anaxagoras, whom they suspected of Atheism.

<sup>2</sup> The Chorus sees in the overthrow of Troia, an instance of this righteous retribution. The audience were, perhaps, intended to think also of the punishment which had fallen on the Persians for the sacrilegious acts of their fathers. The "things inviolable" are the sanctities of the ties of marriage and hospitality, both of which Paris had set at nought.

## ANTISTROPH. I.

Him woeful, subtle Impulse urges on,  
 Resistless in her might,  
 Atè's far-scheming child :  
 All remedy is vain.

It is not hidden, but is manifest,  
 That mischief with its horrid gleaming light ;

389

And, like to worthless bronze,<sup>1</sup>  
 By friction tried and tests,  
 It turns to tarnished blackness in its hue :  
 Since, boy-like, he pursues  
 A bird upon its flight, and so doth bring  
 Upon his city scourge intolerable.

And no God hears his prayer,  
 But bringeth low the unjust,  
 Who deals with deeds like this.  
 Thus was it Paris came

390

Unto the palace of great Atreus' sons,  
 And stole its queen away,  
 And so left brand of shame indelible  
 Upon the board where host and guest had sat.

## STROPH. II.

She leaving to her countrymen at home

<sup>1</sup> Here, and again in v. 612, we have a similitude drawn from the metallurgy of Greek artists. Good bronze, made of copper and tin, takes the green rust which collectors prize, but when rubbed, the brightness reappears. If zinc be substituted for tin, as in our brass, or mixed largely with it, the surface loses its polish, oxidises and becomes black. It is, however, doubtful whether this combination of metals was at the time in use, and the words may simply refer to different degrees of excellence in bronze properly so called.

Wild din of spear and shield and ships of war,  
And bringing, as her dower,  
To Ilion doom of death,

Passed very swiftly through the palace gates,  
Daring what none should dare ;  
And many a wailing cry

They raised, the minstrel prophets of the house,  
" Woe for that kingly home !

Woe for that kingly home and for its chiefs !

400

Woe for the marriage-bed and traces left  
Of wife who loved her lord ! "

\* There stands he silent ; foully wronged and yet

\* Uttering no word of scorn,<sup>1</sup>

\* In deepest woe perceiving she is gone ;

And in his yearning love

For one beyond the sea,

A ghost shall seem to queen it o'er the house ;

The grace of sculptured forms<sup>2</sup>

Is loathèd by her lord,

And in the penury of life's bright eyes

<sup>1</sup> In a corrupt passage like this, the text of which has been so variously restored and rendered, it may be well to give at least one alternative version :

" There stands she silent, with no honour met,  
Nor yet with words of scorn,  
Sweetest to see of all that he has lost."

The words, as so taken, refer to the vision of Helen, described in the lines that follow. Another, for the line " Beholding," &c., . . . would give,

" Believing not he sees the lost one there."

<sup>2</sup> The art of Pheidias had already made it natural at Athens to speak of kings as decorating their palaces with the life-size busts or statues of those they loved.



All Aphrodite's charm  
To utter wreck is gone.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

And phantom shades in visions of the night 410  
Come full of sorrow, bringing vain delight ;  
For vain it is, when one  
Sees seeming shows of good,  
And gliding through his hands the dream is gone,  
After a moment's space,  
On wings that follow still  
Upon the path where sleep goes to and fro."  
Such are the woes at home  
Upon the altar hearth, and worse than these.  
But on a wider scale for those who went  
From Hellas' ancient shore,  
A sore distress that causeth pain of heart 420  
Is seen in every house.  
Yea, many things there are that touch the quick :  
For those whom each did send  
He knoweth ; but, instead  
Of living men, there come to each man's home  
Funereal urns alone,  
And ashes of the dead.

## STROPH. III.

For Ares, trafficking for golden coin  
The lifeless shapes of men,  
And in the rush of battle holding scales,  
Sends now from Ilion

Dust from the funeral pyre,—  
A burden sore to loving friends at home,  
And bitterly bewailed,—  
Filling the brazen urn  
With well-smoothed ashes in the place of men ; 430  
And with high praise they mourn  
This hero skilled and valiant in the fight,  
And that who in the battle nobly fell,  
All for another's wife :  
And other words some murmur secretly ;  
And jealous discontent  
Against the Atreidæ, champions in the suit,  
Creeps on all stealthily ;  
And some around the wall,  
In full and goodly form have sepulture  
There upon Ilion's soil, 440  
And their foes' land inters its conquerors.

## ANTISTROPH. III.

And so the murmurs of their subjects rise  
With sullen discontent,  
And do the work of solemn interdict ;  
And now my boding fear  
Awaits some news of ill,  
At present wrapt in blackness of the night.  
Not heedless are the Gods  
Of shedders of much blood,  
And the dark-robed Erinnyes in due time,  
By adverse chance of life, 450

Place him who prospers in unrighteousness  
In gloom obscure ; and once among the unseen,  
    There is no help for him.  
Fame in excess is but a perilous thing ;  
    For on men's quivering eyes  
Is hurled by Zeus the blinding thunder-bolt.  
    I praise the good success  
    That rouses not God's wrath ;  
Ne'er be it mine a city to lay waste,<sup>1</sup>  
    Nor, as a prisoner, see  
My life wear on beneath another's power !

## EPODE.

And now at bidding of the courier flame,  
    The herald of good news,  
A rumour swift spreads through the city streets,  
But who knows clearly whether it be true,  
Or whether God has mingled lies with it ?  
Who is so childish or so reft of sense,  
    As with his heart a-glow  
At that fresh uttered message of the flame,  
Then to wax sad at changing rumour's sound ?  
It suits the mood that sways a woman's mind  
To pour thanksgiving ere the truth is seen :  
Quickly, with rapid steps, too credulous,  
The limit which a woman sets to trust

<sup>1</sup> Here again one may note a protest against the aggressive policy of Pericles, an assertion of the principle that a nation should be content with independence, without aiming at supremacy.

Advances evermore ;<sup>1</sup>

And with quick doom of death

470

A rumour spread by woman perishes.

[*As the Chorus ends, a Herald is seen approaching, his head wreathed with olive.*<sup>2</sup>

Soon we shall know the sequence of the torches

Light-giving, and of all the beacon-fires,

If they be true ; or if, as 'twere a dream,

This sweet light coming hath beguiled our minds.

I see a herald coming from the shore,

With olive boughs o'ershadowed, and the dust,<sup>3</sup>

Dry sister-twin of mire,<sup>4</sup> announces this,

That neither without voice, nor kindling blaze

Of wood upon the mountains, he will signal

480

With smoke from fire, but either he will come

With clear speech bidding us rejoice, or else . . . [*pauses.*

The word opposed to this I much dislike.

May good completion good beginnings crown !

Who for our city utters other prayers,

May he himself his soul's great error reap !

*Herald.* Hail, soil of this my Argive fatherland,

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps passively, "Soon suffers trespassers."

<sup>2</sup> As the play opens on the morning of the day on which Troy was taken, and now we have the arrivals, first, of the herald, and then of Agamemnon, after the capture has been completed, and the spoil divided, and the fleet escaped a storm, an interval of some days must be supposed between the two parts of the play, the imaginary law of the unities notwithstanding.

<sup>3</sup> The customary adornment of heralds who brought good news. Comp. Sophocles, *Œd. K.* v. 83. The custom prevailed for many centuries, and is recognised by Dante, *Purg.* ii. 70, as usual in his time in Italy.

<sup>4</sup> So in the *Seven against Thebes*, (v. 494) smoke is called "the sister of fire."

Now in the light of the tenth year I reach thee,  
 Though many hopes are shattered, gaining one.  
 For never did I think in Argive land  
 To die, and share the tomb that most I craved. 490  
 Now hail ! thou land ; and hail ! thou light of day :  
 Zeus our great sovran, and thou Pythian king,  
 No longer darting arrows from thy bow.<sup>1</sup>  
 Full hostile wast thou by Scamandros' banks ;  
 Now be thou Saviour, yea, and Healer found,  
 O king Apollo ! And the Gods of war,  
 These I invoke ; my patron Hermes too,  
 Dear herald, whom all heralds reverence,—  
 Those heroes, too, that sent us,<sup>2</sup>—graciously  
 To welcome back the host that war has spared. 500  
 Hail, O ye royal dwellings, home beloved !  
 Ye solemn thrones, and Gods who face the sun !<sup>3</sup>  
 If e'er of old, with cheerful glances now  
 After long time receive our king's array.  
 For he is come, in darkness bringing light  
 To you and all alike, King Agamemnon.  
 Salute him with all grace ; for so 'tis meet,

<sup>1</sup> A probable reference, not only to the story, but to the actual words of Homer, *Il. i.*, 45-52.

<sup>2</sup> Specially the Dioscuri, Castor and Polydeukes.

<sup>3</sup> Such a position (especially in the case of Zeus or Apollo) was common in the temples both of Greece and Rome, and had a very obvious signification. As the play was performed, the actual hour of the day probably coincided with that required by the dramatic sequence of events, and the statues of the Gods were so placed on the stage as to catch the rays of the morning sun when the herald entered. Hence the allusion to the bright "cheerful glances" would have a visible as well as ethical fitness.

Since he hath dug up Troïa with the spade  
 Of Zeus the Avenger, and the plain laid waste ;  
 Gone are their altars and the shrines of Gods ;  
 The seed of all the land is rooted out.  
 This yoke of bondage casting over Troïa,  
 Our chief, the elder of the Atreidæ, comes,  
 A man full blest, and worthiest of high honour  
 Of all that are. For neither Paris' self,  
 Nor his accomplice city now can boast  
 Their deed exceeds its punishment. For he,  
 Found guilty on the charge of rape and theft,<sup>1</sup>  
 Hath lost his prize and brought his father's house,  
 With lands and all, to waste and utter wreck ;  
 And Priam's sons have double forfeit paid.<sup>2</sup>

*Chor.* Joy, joy, thou herald of the Achæan host !

*Her.* All joy is mine : I shrink from death no more.

*Chor.* Did love for this thy fatherland so try thee ?

*Her.* So that mine eyes weep tears for very joy.

*Chor.* Disease full sweet then this ye suffered  
 from . . .

*Her.* How so ? When taught, I shall thy meaning  
 master.

<sup>1</sup> It formed part of the guilt of Paris, that, besides his seduction of Helena, he had carried off part of the treasures of Menelaos.

<sup>2</sup> The idea of a payment twofold the amount of the wrong done, as a complete satisfaction to the sufferer, was common in the early jurisprudence both of Greeks and Hebrews, (Exod. xxii. 4-7.) In some cases it was even more, as in the four or fivefold restitution of Exod. xxii. 1. In the grand opening of Isaiah's message of glad tidings the fact that Jerusalem has received "double for all her sins" is made the ground on the strength of which she may now hope for pardon. Comp. also Isa. lxi. 7 ; Zech. ix. 12.

*Chor.* Ye longed for us who loved you in return.

*Her.* Say'st thou this land its yearning host yearned  
o'er?

*Chor.* Yea, so that oft I groaned for gloom of soul.

*Her.* Whence came these bodings that an army  
hates? 530

*Chor.* Silence I've held long since a charm for ill.

*Her.* How! When your lords were absent, feared ye  
any?

*Chor.* To use thy words, death now would welcome be.

*Her.* Good is the issue; but in so long time  
Some things, one well might say, have prospered well,  
And some give cause for murmurs. Save the Gods,  
Who free from sorrow lives out all his life?  
For should I tell of toils, and how we lodged  
Full hardly, seldom putting in to shore,<sup>1</sup>  
And then with couch full hard. . . . What gave us not  
Good cause for mourning? What ill had we not 540  
As daily portion? And what passed on land,  
That brought yet greater hardship: for our beds  
Were under our foes' walls, and meadow mists  
From heaven and earth still left us wringing wet,  
A constant mischief to our garments, making  
Our hair as shaggy as the beasts'.<sup>2</sup> And if  
One spoke of winter frosts that killed the birds,

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, "Full hardly, and the close and crowded decks."

<sup>2</sup> So stress is laid upon this form of hardship, as rising from the climate of Troia, by Sophocles. *Aias*, 1206.

By Ida's snow-storms made intolerable,<sup>1</sup>  
 Or heat, when Ocean in its noontide couch  
 Windless reclined and slept without a wave. . . .  
 But why lament o'er this? Our toil is past; 550  
 Past too is theirs who in the warfare fell,  
 So that no care have they to rise again.  
 Why should I count the number of the dead,  
 Or he that lives mourn o'er adversity?  
 To change and chance I bid a long Farewell:  
 With us, the remnant of the Argive host,  
 Good fortune wins, no ills as counterpoise.  
 So it is meet to this bright sun we boast,  
 Who travel homeward over land and sea;  
 "The Argive host who now have captured Troia, 560  
 These spoils of battle <sup>2</sup> to the Gods of Helias  
 Hang on their pegs, enduring prize and joy." <sup>3</sup>  
 Hearing these things we ought to bless our country  
 And our commanders; and the grace of Zeus  
 That wrought this shall be honoured. My tale's told.  
*Chor.* Thy words o'ercome me, and I say not nay;

<sup>1</sup> One may conjecture that here also, as with the passage describing the succession of beacon fires, (vv. 231-314,) the description would have for an Athenian audience the interest of recalling personal reminiscences of some recent campaign in Thrakè, or on the coasts of Asia.

<sup>2</sup> We may, perhaps, think of the herald, as he speaks, placing some representative trophy upon the pegs on the pedestals of the statues of the great Gods of Hellas, whom he had invoked on his entrance.

<sup>3</sup> Or, "So that to this bright morn our sons may boast,  
 As they o'er land and ocean take their flight,  
 'The Argive host of old, who captured Troia,  
 These spoils of battle to the Gods of Hellas,  
 Hung on their pegs, a trophy of old days.'



To learn good keeps youth's freshness with the old.  
 The house and Clytæmnestra well may care  
 Most for these' things, yet me too they enrich.

*Enter* CLYTÆMNESTRA.

*Clytæm.* I long ago uplifted strains of joy,  
 When the first fiery courier came by night,  
 Telling of Troia taken and laid waste :  
 And then one girding at me spake, " Dost think,  
 Trusting in beacons, Troia is laid waste ?  
 This heart elate is just a woman's way."  
 In words like these they made me out distraught ;  
 Yet still I sacrificed, and with a strain  
 Shrill as a woman's, they, now here, now there,  
 Throughout the city hymns of blessing raised  
 In shrines of Gods, and lulled to gentle sleep  
 The fragrant flame that on the incense fed.  
 And now why need'st thou lengthen out thy words ?  
 I from the king himself the tale shall learn ;  
 And that I show all zeal to welcome back  
 My honoured lord on his return (for what  
 Is brighter joy for wife to see than this,  
 When God has brought her husband back from war,  
 To open wide her gates ?) tell my lord this,  
 " To come with all his speed, the city's idol ;"  
 And " may he find a faithful wife at home,  
 Such as he left her, noble watch-dog still  
 For him, and hostile to his enemies ;

570

580

590

And like in all things else, who has not broken  
 One seal of his in all this length of time."<sup>1</sup>  
 No pleasure have I known, nor scandal ill  
 With any other more than . . . stains on bronze.<sup>2</sup>  
 Such is my vaunt, and being full of truth,  
 Not shameful for a noble wife to speak.<sup>3</sup> [Exit.

*Chor.* [to *Herald.*] She hath thus spoken in thy hear-  
 ing now

A goodly word for good interpreters.  
 But tell me, herald, tell of Menelaos,  
 If, coming home again in safety, he  
 Is with you, the dear strength of this our land.

*Her.* I cannot make report of false good news,  
 So that my friends should long rejoice in it.

<sup>1</sup> The husband, on his departure, sealed up his special treasures. It was the glory of the faithful wife or the trusty steward to keep these seals unbroken.

<sup>2</sup> There is an ambiguity, possibly an intentional one, in the comparison which Clytæmnestra uses. If there was no such art as that of "staining bronze" (or copper) known at the time, the words would be a natural phrase enough to describe what was represented as an impossibility. Later on in the history of art, however, as in the time of Plutarch, a process so described (perhaps analogous to enamelling) is described (*De Pyth. Orac.* § 2) as common. If we suppose the art to have been a mystery known to the few, but not to the many, in the time of Æschylos, then the words would have for the hearers the point of a *double entendre*. She seems to the mass to disclaim what yet, to those in the secret, she acknowledges.

Another rendering refers "bronze" to the "sword," and makes the stains those of blood; as though she said, "I am as guiltless of adultery as of murder," while yet she knew that she had committed the one, and meant to commit the other. The possibility of such a meaning is certainly in the words and with a sharp-witted audience catching at ænigmas and dark sayings may have added to their suggestiveness.

<sup>3</sup> The last two lines are by some editors assigned to the Herald.

*Chor.* Ah! could'st thou good news speak, and also  
true!

These things asunder are not well concealed.

*Her.* The chief has vanished from the Achæan host,  
He and his ship. I speak no falsehood here.

*Chor.* In sight of all when he from Ilion sailed?  
Or did a storm's wide evil part him from you? 610

*Her.* Like skilful archer thou hast hit the mark,  
And in few words hast told of evil long.

*Chor.* And was it of him as alive or dead  
The whisper of the other sailors ran?

*Her.* None to that question answer clear can give,  
Save the Sun-God who feeds the life of earth.

*Chor.* How say'st thou? Did a storm come on our  
fleet,

And do its work through anger of the Gods?

*Her.* It is not meet a day of tidings good  
To mar with evil news. Apart for each 620  
Is special worship. But when courier brings  
With louring face the ill men pray against,  
And tells a city that its host has fallen,  
That for the state there is a general wound,  
That many a man from many a home is driven,  
As banned by double scourge that Ares loves,  
Woe doubly-barbed, Death's two-horsed chariot this. . .  
When with such griefs as freight a herald comes,  
'Tis meet to chant the Erinnyes' dolorous song;  
But for glad messenger of good deeds wrought

That bring deliverance, coming to a town 630  
Rejoicing in its triumph, . . . how shall I  
Blend good with evil, telling of a storm  
That smote the Achæans, not without God's wrath ?  
For they a compact swore who erst were foes,  
Ocean and Fire, and their pledges gave,  
Wrecking the ill-starred army of the Argives ;  
And in the night rose ill of raging storm :  
For Thrakian tempests shattered all the ships,  
Each on the other. Some thus crashed and bruised,  
By the storm stricken and the surging foam  
Of wind-tost waves, soon vanished out of sight, 640  
Whirled by an evil pilot. And when rose  
The sun's bright orb, behold, the Ægæan sea  
Blossomed with wrecks of ships and dead Achæans.  
And as for us and our uninjured ship,  
Surely 'twas some one stole or begged us off,  
Some God, not man, presiding at the helm ;  
And on our ship with good will Fortune sat,  
Giver of safety, so that nor in haven  
Felt we the breakers, nor on rough rock beach  
Ran we aground. But when we had escaped 650  
The hell of waters, then in clear, bright day,  
Not trusting in our fortune, we in thought  
O'er new ills brooded of our host destroyed,  
And eke most roughly handled. And if still  
Breathe any of them, they report of us  
As having perished. How else should they speak ?

And we in our turn deem that they are so.  
 God send good ending ! Look you, first and chief,  
 For Menelaos' coming ; and indeed,  
 If any sunbeam know of him alive  
 And well, by help of Zeus who has not willed  
 As yet to blot out all the regal race,  
 Some hope there is that he 'll come back again.  
 Know, hearing this, that thou the truth hast heard.

669

[*Exit Herald.*]

STROPH. I.

*Chor.* Who was it named her with such wondrous  
 truth ?

(Could it be One unseen,  
 In strange prevision of her destined work,  
 Guiding the tongue through chance ?)  
 Who gave that war-wed, strife-upstirring one  
 The name of Helen, ominous of ill ?<sup>1</sup>

670

For great ill as from Hell  
 Brought she on Hellas' men  
 And ships, and Ilion's towers.  
 From bower of gorgeous curtains forth she sailed

<sup>1</sup> It need hardly be said that it is as difficult to render a *paronomasia* of this kind as it is to reproduce those, more or less analogous, which we find in the prophets of the Old Testament, (Comp. especially Micah i. ;) but it seems better to substitute something which approaches, however imperfectly, to an equivalent than to obscure the reference to the *nomen et omen* by abandoning the attempt to translate it. "Hell of men, and hell of ships, and hell of towers," has been the rendering adopted by many previous translators. The Greek fondness for this play on names is seen in Sophocles. *Aias*, v. 401.

With breeze of Zephyr Titan-born and strong ;<sup>1</sup>  
 And hosts of many men,  
 Hunters that bore the shield,  
 Went on the track of those who steered their boat  
 Unseen to leafy banks of Simois,  
 On her account who came,  
 Dire cause of strife with bloodshed in her train.

680

ANTISTROPH. I.

And so the wrath which works its vengeance out  
 Dear bride to Ilion brought,  
 (Ah, all too dear indeed !) exacting still<sup>2</sup>  
 After long lapse of time  
 The penalty of foul dishonour done  
 To friendship's board and Zeus, of host and guest  
 The God, from those who paid  
 Their loud-voiced honour then  
 Unto that bridal strain,  
 That hymeneal chorus which to chant  
 Fell to the lot of all the bridegroom's kin.<sup>3</sup>  
 But learning other song,

<sup>1</sup> Zephyros, Boreas, and the other great winds were represented in the *Theogony* of Hesiod (v. 134) as the offspring of Astræos and Eôs, and Astræos was a Titan. The west wind was, of course, favourable to Paris as he went with Helen from Greece to Troia.

<sup>2</sup> Here again the translator has to meet the difficulty of a pun. As an alternative we might take—

“ To Ilion brought, well-named,  
 A marriage marring all.”

<sup>3</sup> The sons of Priam are thought of as taking part in the celebration of Helen's marriage with Paris, and as, therefore, involving themselves in the guilt and the penalty of his crime.

Priam's ancient city now  
 Bewaileth sore, and calls on Paris' name,  
 Wedded in fatal wedlock ; all the time  
     \* Enduring tear-fraught life  
 \* For all the blood its citizens had lost.

## STROPH. II.

Yea, once a lion's cub,  
 A mischief in his house,  
 As foster child one reared <sup>1</sup>  
 While still it loved the teats ;  
 In life's preluding dawn  
 Tame, by the children loved,  
 And fondled by the old : <sup>2</sup>  
 Oft in his arms 'twas held,  
 Like infant newly born,  
 With eyes that brightened to the hand that stroked,  
 And fawning at the brest of hunger keen.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

But when full-grown, it showed

<sup>1</sup> Here, too, it may be well to give an alternative rendering—

“ A mischief in his house,  
 A man reared, not on milk.”

Home-reared lions seem to have been common as pets. both among Greeks and Latins, (Arist. *Hist. Anim.* ix. 31 ; Plutarch *de Cohib. iræ*, § 14, p. 822,) sometimes, as in Martial's Epigram, ii. 25, with fatal consequences. The text shows the practice to have been common enough in the time of Pericles to supply a similitude.

<sup>2</sup> There may, possibly, be a half allusion here to the passage in the *Iliad*, (vv. 154-160,) which describes the fascination which the beauty of Helen exercised on the Trojan elders.

The nature of its sires ;  
For it unbidden made  
A feast in recompense  
Of all their fostering care,  
\* By banquet of slain sheep ;  
With blood the house was stained ;  
A curse no slaves could bind,  
Great mischief murderous :

710

By God's decree a priest of Atè thus  
Was reared, and grew within the man's own house.

## STROPH. III.

So I would tell that thus to Ilion came,  
Mood as of calm when all the air is still,  
The gentle pride and joy of kingly state,  
A tender glance of eye,  
The full-blown blossom of a passionate love,  
Thrilling the very soul ;  
And yet she turned aside,  
And wrought a bitter end of marriage feast,  
Coming to Priam's race,  
Ill sojourner, ill friend,  
Sent by great Zeus, the God of host and guest—  
Erinnys, bride-bewailed.

720

## ANTISTROPH. III.

There lives an old saw, framed in ancient days,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The poet becomes a prophet, and asserts what it has been given him to know of the righteous government of God. The dominant creed of Greece at the time was, that the Gods were envious of man's prosperity, that this



In memories of men, that high estate  
Full-grown brings forth its young, nor childless dies,

But that from good success  
Springs to the race a woe insatiable.

730

But I, apart from all,  
Hold this my creed, alone :  
For impious act it is that offspring breeds,  
Like to their parent stock :  
For still in every house  
That loves the right their fate for evermore  
Hath issue good and fair.

## STROPH. IV.

But Recklessness of old  
Is wont to breed another Recklessness,  
Sporting its youth in human miseries,  
At once, or whensoever the fixed hour comes :  
This young one, in its turn,  
Begets Satiety,  
And Power that none can war with or resist,  
Daring that Heaven defies,—  
Two curses dark within their dwelling-place,  
Like those that gendered them.

730

alone, apart from moral evil, was enough to draw down their wrath, and bring a curse upon the prosperous house. So, *e.g.*, Amasis tells Polycrates (Herod. iii. 40) that the unseen Divinity that rules the world is envious, that power and glory are inevitably the precursors of destruction. Comp. also the speech of Artabanos, (Herod. vii. 10, 46.) Against this, in the tone of one who speaks single-handed for the truth, Æschylos, through the Chorus, enters his protest.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

But Justice shineth bright  
 In dwellings that are dark and dim with smoke,  
 And honours life law-ruled,  
 While gold-decked homes conjoined with hands defiled  
 She with averted eyes [ 780  
 Hath left, and draweth near  
 To holier things, nor worships might of wealth,  
 If counterfeit its praise ;  
 But still directeth all the course of things  
 Towards its destined end.

[AGAMEMNON is seen approaching in his  
 chariot, followed by another chariot, in  
 which CASSANDRA is seen standing, carry-  
 ing her prophet's wand in her hand, and  
 wearing fillets round her temples, and by  
 a great train of soldiers bearing trophies.  
 As they come on the stage the Chorus sings  
 its welcome.

Come then, king, thou son of Atreus,  
 Waster of the towers of Troia,  
 What of greeting and of homage  
 Shall I give, nor overshooting,  
 Nor falling short of fittest honour ?  
 Men there are who, right transgressing,  
 Semblance honour more than being.  
 O'er the sufferer all are ready

Wail of bitter grief to utter,  
 Though the piercing pang of sorrow  
 Never to their heart approaches ;  
 So with counterfeit rejoicing  
 Men strain faces that are smileless ;  
 But whoso his own sheep knoweth,  
 It cannot be men's eyes should 'scape him,  
 Which, of kindly purpose seeming, 770  
 Fawn with weak and watery fondness.  
 Thou, when thou did'st lead thine army  
 For Helen's sake—(I will not hide it)—  
 Wast in my eyes not admirèd,  
 Painted as by clumsiest artist,  
 Guiding ill the helm of reason,  
 Giving men to death's doom sentenced  
 Courage which their will rejected. 780  
 Now nor from the spirit's surface,  
 Nor with touch of thought unfriendly,  
 All the toil, I say, is welcome,  
 If men bring it to good issue.  
 And thou soon shalt know, enquiring,  
 Him who rightly, him who wrongly  
 Of thy citizens fulfilleth  
 Task of office for the city.

*Agam.* First Argos, and the Gods who guard the land,

<sup>1</sup> Sc. Agamemnon, by the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, had induced his troops to persevere in an expedition from which, in their inmost hearts, they shrank back with strong dislike.

'Tis right to greet ; to them in part I owe  
 This my return, and vengeance that I took  
 On Priam's city. Not on hearsay proof  
 Judging the cause, with one consent the Gods  
 Cast in their votes into the urn of blood  
 For Ilion's ruin and her people's death ;  
 \* I' the other urn Hope touched the rim alone, 790  
 Still far from being filled full.<sup>1</sup> And even yet  
 The captured city by its smoke is seen,  
 \* The incense clouds of Atè live on still ;  
 And, in the act of dying with its prey,  
 From richest store the dust sends savours sweet.  
 For these things it is meet to give the Gods  
 Thank-offerings long-enduring ; for our nets  
 Of vengeance we set close, and for a woman  
 Our Argive monster laid the city low,<sup>2</sup>  
 Foaled by the mare, a people bearing shield,  
 Taking its leap when set the Pleiades ;<sup>3</sup>  
 And, bounding o'er the tower, that ravenous lion 800  
 Lapped up its fill of blood of kingly race.

<sup>1</sup> Possibly an allusion to Pandora's box. Here, too, Hope alone was left, but it only came up to where the curve of the rim began, not to its top. The imagery is drawn from the older method of voting, in which (as in *Eumenides*, v. 678) the votes for condemnation and acquittal were cast into separate urns.

<sup>2</sup> The lion, as the symbol of the house of Atreus, still seen in the sculptures of Mykenæ ; the horse, in allusion to the stratagem by which Troia had been taken.

<sup>3</sup> At the end of autumn, and therefore at a season when a storm like that described by the herald would be a probable incident enough.

This prelude to the Gods I lengthen out ;  
 And as concerns thy purpose (this I well  
 Remember hearing) I with thee agree,  
 And thou in me may'st find an advocate.  
 With but few men is it their natural bent  
 To honour without grudging prosperous friend :  
 For ill-souled envy that the heart besets,  
 Doubles his woe who suffers that disease :  
 He by his own griefs first is overwhelmed,  
 And groans at sight of others' happier lot.  
 \* And I with good cause say, (for well I know)  
 They are but friendship's mirror, phantom shade,  
 Who seemed to be my most devoted friends.  
 Odysseus only, who against his will<sup>1</sup>  
 Sailed with us, still was found true trace-fellow :  
 And this I say of him or dead or living.  
 But as for all that touches on the Gods,  
 Or on the State, in full assembly we,  
 Calling our council, will deliberate :  
 For what goes well we should with care provide  
 How longest it may last ; and where there needs  
 A healing charm, there we with all good will,  
 By surgery or cautery will try  
 To turn away the mischief of disease.  
 And now will I to home and household hearth

819

639

<sup>1</sup> So in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* (v. 1025) taunts Odysseus :—

“ And yet thou sailedst with them by constraint,  
 By tricks fast bound.”

Move on, and first give thanks unto the Gods  
Who led me forth, and brought me back again.  
Since Victory follows, long may she remain !

*Enter CLYTÆMNESTRA, followed by female attendants  
carrying purple tapestry.*

*Clytæm.* Ye citizens, ye Argive senators,  
I will not shrink from telling you the tale  
Of wife's true love. In time one's shrinking fear 830  
Dwindles to nought. Not learning it from others,  
I will narrate my own unhappy life,  
The whole long time my lord at Ilion stayed.  
For first, that wife should sit at home alone  
Without her husband is a monstrous grief,  
Hearing full many an ill report of him,  
Now one and now another coming still,  
Bringing news home, worse trouble upon bad.  
Yea, if my lord had met as many wounds  
As rumour told of, floating to our house, 840  
He had been riddled more than any net ;  
And had he died, as tidings still poured in,  
Then he, a second Geryon<sup>1</sup> with three lives,  
Had boasted of a threefold coverlet

<sup>1</sup> Geryon appears in the myth of Hercules as a monster with three heads and three bodies, ruling over the island Erytheia, in the far West, beyond Hesperia. To destroy him and seize his cattle was one of the "twelve labours," with which Hesiod (*Theogon.* vv. 287-294) had already made men familiar.

Of earth above, (I will not say, below him),<sup>1</sup>  
 Dying one death for each of those his forms ;  
 And so, because of all these ill reports,  
 Full many a noose around my neck have others  
Loosed by main force, when I had hung myself.

And for this cause no son is with me now,

850

Holding in trust the pledges of our love,  
 As he should be, Orestes. Wonder not ;

For now a kind ally doth nurture him,  
 Strophios the Phokian, telling me of woes  
 Of twofold aspect, danger on thy side

At Ilion, and lest loud-voiced anarchy  
 Should overthrow thy council, since 'tis still  
 The wont of men to kick at those who fall.

No trace of guile bears this excuse of mine ;  
 As for myself, the fountains of my tears  
 Have flowed till they are dry, no drop remains,

860

And mine eyes suffer from o'er late repose,  
 Watching with tears the beacons set for thee,<sup>2</sup>  
 Too long untended. And in dreams full oft  
 My slumbers light were startled by the gnat  
 With thin wings buzzing, seeing in the night

<sup>1</sup> When a man is buried, there is earth above and earth below him. Clytemnestra having used the word "coverlet," pauses to make her language accurate to the very letter. She is speaking only of the earth which would have been laid over her husband's corpse, had he died as often as he was reported to have done. She will not utter anything so ominous as an allusion to the depths below him stretching down to Hades.

<sup>2</sup> Or—

" Weeping because the torches in thy house  
 No more were lighted as they were of yore."

Ills that stretched far beyond the time of sleep.<sup>1</sup>  
 Now, having borne all this, with mind at ease  
 I hail my Lord as watch-dog of the fold,  
 The stay that saves the ship, of lofty roof 870  
 Main column-prop, a father's only child,  
 Land that beyond all hope the sailor sees,  
 Morn of great brightness following after storm,  
 Clear-flowing fount to thirsty traveller.<sup>2</sup>  
 Yes, it is pleasant to escape all straits :  
 With words of welcome such as these I greet thee ;  
 May jealous Heaven forgive them ! for we bore  
 Full many an evil in the past ; and now,  
 Dear husband, leave thy car, nor on the ground,  
 O King, set thou the foot that Ilion trampled. 880  
 Why linger ye, [*turning to her attendants,*] ye maids,  
     whose task it was  
 To strow the pathway with your tapestries ?  
 Let the whole road be straightway purple-strown,  
 That Justice lead to home he looked not for.  
 All else my care, by slumber not subdued,  
 Will justly work as God's will hath decreed.\*

1 The words touch upon the psychological fact that in dreams, as in other abnormal states of the mind, the usual measures of time disappear, and we seem to pass through the experiences of many years in the slumber of a few minutes.

2 The rhetoric of the passage, with all its multiplied similitudes, fine as it is in itself, receives its dramatic significance by being put into the lips of Clytemnestra. She "doth protest too much." A true wife would have been content with fewer words.

3 The last three lines of the speech are of course intentionally ambiguous,



*(The handmaids advance, and are about to lay the purple carpets on the ground.)*

Agam. O child of Leda, guardian of my home,  
 Thy speech hath with my absence well agreed—  
 For long indeed thou mad'st it—but true praise  
 Is boon that I must seek at other hands. 890  
 I pray thee, do not in thy woman's fashion  
 Pamper my pride, nor in barbaric guise  
 Prostrate on earth bawl out thy cries to me ;  
 Make not my path offensive to the Gods . . .  
 By spreading it with carpets.<sup>1</sup> ~~They alone~~  
 May claim that honour ; but for mortal men  
 To walk on fair embroidery, to me  
 Seems nowise without peril. So I bid you  
 To honour me as man, and not as God.  
 Apart from all foot-mats and tapestry  
 My fame speaks loudly ; and God's greatest gift 900  
 Is not to err from wisdom. We must bless

carrying one meaning to the ear of Agamemnon, and another to that of the audience.

<sup>1</sup> There is obviously a side-thrust, such as an Athenian audience would catch at, at the token of homage which the Persian kings required of their subjects, the prostration at their feet, the earth spread over with costly robes. Of the latter custom we have examples in the history of Jehu, (2 Kings ix. 13,) in our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, (Mark xi. 8,) in the usages of modern Persian kings, (Malcolm's *Persia*, i. 580 ;) perhaps also in the true rendering of Ps. xlv. 14, "She shall be brought unto the king on raiment of needle-work." In the march of Xerxes across the Hellespont myrtle-boughs strown on the bridge of boats took the place of robes, (Herod. vii. 54.) To the Greek character, with its strong love of independence, such customs were hateful. The case of Pausanias, who offended the national feeling by assuming the outward state of the Persian kings, must have been recalled to the minds of the Athenians, intentionally or otherwise, by such a passage as this.

Him only who ends life in fair estate.<sup>1</sup>

Should I thus act throughout, good hope were mine.

*Clytæm.* Nay, say not this to thwart my purposes.

*Agam.* Know that I change not for the worse my purpose.

*Clytæm.* In fear, perchance, thou vowèd'st thus to act.

*Agam.* If any, I, with fullest knowledge spake.<sup>2</sup>

*Clytæm.* What think'st thou Priam, had he wrought such deeds . . . ?

*Agam.* Full gladly he, I trow, had trod on carpets.

*Clytæm.* Then shrink not thou through fear of men's dispraise. 910

*Agam.* A people's muttered whisper works with strength.<sup>3</sup>

*Clytæm.* Who is not envied is not enviable.

*Agam.* 'Tis not a woman's part to crave for strife.

*Clytæm.* True, yet the prosperous e'en should sometimes yield.

*Agam.* Dost thou then value victory in this strife?

*Clytæm.* Nay, hearken! Give me sway at least in this.

*Agam.* Well, then, if thou wilt have it so, with speed

<sup>1</sup> The "old saying, famed of many men," which we find in the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles, (v. 1,) and in the counsel of Solon to Cræsos, (Herod. i. 32.)

<sup>2</sup> He who had suffered so much from the wrath of Artemis at Aulis knew what it was to rouse the wrath and jealousy of the Gods.

<sup>3</sup> An echo of a line in Hesiod, (*Works and Days*, 763)—

"No whispered rumours which the many spread  
Can ever wholly perish."

Let some one loose my buskins,<sup>1</sup> (servants they  
 Doing the foot's true work,) and as I tread  
 Upon these robes sea-purpled, may no wrath  
 From glance of Gods smite on me from afar ! 920  
 Great shame I feel to trample with my foot  
 This wealth of carpets, costliest work of looms ;  
 So far for this. This stranger [*pointing to CASSANDRA*]  
 lead thou in

With kindness. On him who gently wields  
 His power God's eye looks kindly from afar.  
 None of their own will choose a bond-slave's life ;  
 And she, the chosen flower of many spoils,  
 Has followed with me as the army's gift.  
 But since I turn, obeying thee in this,  
 I'll to my palace go, on purple treading. 930

*Clytem.* There is a sea,—and who shall drain it dry ?  
 Producing still new store of purple juice,  
 Precious as silver, staining many a robe.  
 And in our house, with God's help, O my king,  
 'Tis ours to boast our palace knows no stint.  
 Trampling of many robes would I have vowed,

<sup>1</sup> Here, too, we may trace a reference to the Oriental custom of recognising the sanctity of a consecrated place by taking the shoes from off the feet, as in Exod. iii. 5, in the services of the Tabernacle and Temple, through all their history, (*Juven. Sat. vi. 159.*) in all mosques to the present day. Agamemnon, yielding to the temptress, seeks to make a compromise with his conscience. He will walk upon the tapestry, but will treat it as if it, of right, belonged to the Gods, and were a consecrated thing. It is probably in connexion with this incident that Æschylos was said to have been the first to bring actors on the stage in these boots or buskins, (*Suidas. s. v. ἀρβύλη.*)

Had that been ordered me in oracles,  
 When for my lord's return I then did plan  
 My votive gifts. For while the root lives on,  
 The foliage stretches even to the house,  
 And spreads its shade against the dog-star's rage ; 940  
 So when thou comest to thy hearth and home,  
 Thou show'st the warmth that comes in winter time ;  
 And when from unripe clusters Zeus matures  
 The wine,<sup>1</sup> then is there coolness in the house,  
 If the true master dwelleth in his home.  
 Ah, Zeus ! the All-worker, Zeus, work out for me  
 All that I pray for ; let it be thy care  
 To look to what Thou purposest to work.<sup>2</sup>

[*Exeunt AGAMEMNON, walking on the tapestry,  
 CLYTÆMNESTRA, and her attendants.*]

STROPH. I.

*Chor.* Why thus continually  
 Do haunting phantoms hover at the gate  
 Of my foreboding heart ? 950  
 Why floats prophetic song, unbought, unbidden ?  
 Why doth no steadfast trust  
 Sit on my mind's dear throne,  
 To fling it from me as a vision dim ?  
 Long time hath passed since stern-ropes of our ships  
 Were fastened on the sand, when our great host

<sup>1</sup> The words of Isaiah, (xviii. 5,) "when the sour grape is ripening in the flower," present an almost verbal parallel.

<sup>2</sup> The ever-recurring ambiguity of Clytæmnestra's language is again traceable, as is also her fondness for rhetorical similitudes.

Of those that sailed in ships  
Had come to Ilion's towers.<sup>1</sup>

## ANTISTROPH. I.

And now from these mine eyes  
I learn, myself reporting to myself,  
Their safe return ; and yet  
My mind within itself, taught by itself,  
Chanteth Erinny's dirge,  
The lyreless melody,  
And hath no strength of wonted confidence.  
Not vain these inner pulses, as my heart  
Whirls eddying in breast oracular.  
I, against hope, will pray  
It prove false oracle.

960

970

## STROPH. II.

Of high, o'erflowing health  
There is no limit fixed that satisfies ;  
For evermore disease, as neighbour close  
Whom but a wall divides,  
Upon it presses ; and man's prosperous state  
\* Moves on its course, and strikes  
Upon an unseen rock ;  
But if his fear for safety of his freight,  
A part, from well-poised sling, shall sacrifice,  
Then the whole house sinks not,

980

<sup>1</sup> The Chorus speaks in perplexity. It cannot get rid of its forebodings, and yet it would seem as if the time for the fulfilment of the dark words of Calchas must have passed long since. It actually sees the safe return of the leader of the host, yet still its fears haunt it.

O'erfilled with wretchedness,  
Nor does he swamp the boat :  
So, too, abundant gift  
From Zeus in bounteous fulness, and the fruit  
Of glebe at harvest tide  
Have caused to cease sore hunger's pestilence ;

## ANTISTROPH. II.

But blood that once hath flowed  
In purple stains of death upon the ground  
At a man's feet, who then can bid it back  
By any charm of song ?  
Else him who knew to call the dead to life<sup>1</sup>  
\* Zeus had not sternly checked, 990  
\* As warning unto all ;  
But unless Fate, firm-fixed, had barred our fate  
From any chance of succour from the Gods,  
Then had my heart poured forth  
Its thoughts, outstripping speech.<sup>2</sup>  
But now in gloom it wails  
Sore vexed, with little hope  
At any time hereafter fitting end 1000  
To find, unravelling,  
My soul within me burning with hot thoughts.

<sup>1</sup> Asclepios, whom Zeus smote with his thunderbolt for having restored Hippolytos to life.

<sup>2</sup> The Chorus, in spite of their suspicions and forebodings, have given the king no warning. They excuse themselves by the plea of necessity, the sovereign decree of Zeus overruling all man's attempts to withstand it.

*Re-enter CLYTÆMNESTRA.*

*Clytæm.* [to CASSANDRA, who has remained in the chariot during the choral ode.]

Thou too—I mean Cassandra—go within ;  
 Since Zeus hath made it thine, and not in wrath,  
 To share the lustral waters in our house,  
 Standing with many a slave the altar nigh  
 Of Zeus, who guards our goods.<sup>1</sup> Now get thee down  
 From out this car, and be not over proud.  
 They say that e'en Alcmena's son endured<sup>2</sup>  
 Being sold a slave, constrained to bear the yoke :  
 And if the doom of this ill chance is thine,  
 Great gain it is to meet with lords who own  
 Ancestral wealth. But whoso reap full crops  
 They never dared to hope for, these in all,  
 And beyond measure, to their slaves are harsh :<sup>3</sup>  
 From us thou hast whate'er is customary.

1010

*Chor.* So ends she, speaking words full clear to thee,  
 And seeing thou art in the toils of fate,

<sup>1</sup> Cassandra is summoned to an act of worship. The household is gathered, the altar to Zeus Ktesios, (the God of the family property,) standing in the servants' hall, is ready. The new slave must come in and take her place with the others.

<sup>2</sup> As in the story which forms the groundwork of the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles, vv. 250-280, that Heracles had been sold to Omphale as a slave, in penalty for the murder of Iphitos.

<sup>3</sup> Political as well as dramatic. The Eupatrid poet appeals to public opinion against the *nouveaux riches*, the tanners and lamp-makers, who were already beginning to push themselves forward towards prominence and power. The way was thus prepared in the first play of the Trilogy for what is known to have been the main object of the last.

If thou obey, thou wilt obey ; and yet,  
Perchance, obey thou wilt not.

*Clytæm.* Nay, but unless she, like a swallow, speaks  
A barbarous tongue unknown, I, speaking now  
Within her apprehension, must persuade.

*Chor.* [*to CASSANDRA.*] Go with her. What she bids  
is now the best ; 1021

Obey her : leave thy seat upon this car.

*Clytæm.* I have no leisure here to stay without :  
For as regards our central altar, there  
The sheep stand by as victims for the fire ;  
For never had we hoped such thanks to give :  
If thou wilt do this, make no more delay ;  
But if thou understandest not my words,  
Then wave thy foreign hand in lieu of speech.

[*CASSANDRA shudders as in horror, but  
makes no sign.*]

*Chor.* The stranger seems a clear interpreter  
To need. Her look is like a captured deer's. 1022

*Clytæm.* Nay, she is mad, and follows evil thoughts,  
Since, leaving now her city newly-captured,  
She comes, and knows not how to take the curb,  
Ere she foam out her passion in her blood.  
I will not, uttering more, be put to shame. [*Exit.*]

*Chor.* And I, as pitying her, will not be wroth :  
Come, thou poor sufferer, empty leave thy car ;  
Yield to thy doom, and handsel now the yoke.

[*CASSANDRA leaves the chariot, and bursts  
into a cry of wailing.*]



## STROPH. I.

*Cass.* Woe! woe, and well-a-day!

Apollo! O Apollo!

1940

*Chor.* Why criest thou so loud on Loxias?  
The wailing cry of mourner suits not him.

## ANTISTROPH. I.

*Cass.* Woe! woe, and well-a-day!

Apollo! O Apollo!

*Chor.* Again with boding words she calls the God,  
Though all unmeet as helper to men's groans.

## STROPH. II.

*Cass.* Apollo! O Apollo!

God of all paths, Apollo true to me;

With might appalling thou again destroy'st me.<sup>1</sup>

*Chor.* She seems her own ills like to prophecy: 1059  
The God's great gift is in the slave's mind yet.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

*Cass.* Apollo! O Apollo!

God of all paths, Apollo true to me;

What path hast led me? To what roof hast brought?

*Chor.* To that of the Atreidæ. This I tell,  
If thou know'st not. Thou wilt not find it false.

<sup>1</sup> Here again the translator has the task of finding an English *paronomasia* which approximates to that of the Greek, between Apollo and ἀπόλλων, the *destroyer*. To Apollo, as the God of paths, (*Aguieus*,) an altar stood, column-fashion, before the street-door of every house, and to such an altar, placed by the door of Agamemnon's palace, Cassandra turns, with the twofold play upon the name.

STROPH. III.

Cass. Ah! Ah! Ah me!

Say rather to a house God hates—that knows

Murder, self-slaughter, ropes,<sup>1</sup>

A human shamble staining earth with blood. 1060

Chor. Keen scented seems this stranger, like a  
hound,

And searches out whose slaughter she shall find.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Cass. Ah! Ah! Ah me!

Lo! [*looking wildly, and pointing upward,*] there the wit-  
nesses whose word I trust,—

Those babes who wail their death,

The roasted flesh that made a father's meal.

Chor. We of a truth had heard thy seeress fame,  
But prophets now are not the race we seek.

STROPH. IV.

Cass. Ah me! Oh horror! What ill schemes she  
now?

What is this new great woe? 1070

Great evil plots she in this very house,

Hard for its friends to bear, immedicable;

And help stands far aloof.

<sup>1</sup> This refers, probably, to the death of Hippodameia, the wife of Pelops, who killed herself, in remorse for the death of Chrysippos, or fear of her husband's anger. The horrors of the royal house of Argos pass, one by one, before the vision of the prophetess, and this leads the procession, followed by the spectres of the murdered children of Thyestes.

*Chor.* These oracles of thine surpass my ken ;  
Those I know well. The whole town rings with them.<sup>1</sup>

## ANTISTROPH. IV.

*Cass.* Ah me ! O daring one ! what work'st thou  
here,

Who having cleansed and cheered  
Thy helpmate, then . . . How shall I tell the end ?  
For quick it comes, and hand is following hand,  
Stretched out to strike the blow.

1089

*Chor.* Still I discern not ; after riddles dark  
I am perplexed with thy dim oracles.

## STROPH. V.

*Cass.* Ah, horror, horror ! What is this I see ?  
Is it a snare of Hell ?  
Nay, the true net is she who shares his bed,  
Who shares in working death.  
Ha ! let the Band insatiable in hate<sup>2</sup>  
Howl for the race its wild exulting cry  
O'er sacrifice that calls  
For storm of many stones.

## STROPH. VI.

*Chor.* What dire Erinnyes bidd'st thou o'er our house  
To raise shrill cry ? Thy speech but little cheers ;

<sup>1</sup> The Chorus understands the vision of the *clairvoyante* as regards the past tragedy of the house of Atreus, but not that which seems to portend another actually imminent.

<sup>2</sup> Fresh visions come before the eyes of the seeress. She beholds the company of Erinnyes hovering over the accursed house, and calls on them to continue their work till the new crime has met with its due punishment.

And to my heart there rush  
Blood-drops of saffron hue,<sup>1</sup>

1090

\* Which, when from deadly wound  
They fall, together with life's setting rays  
End, as it fails, their own appointed course :  
And mischief comes apace.

ANTISTROPH. V.

*Cass.* See, see, I say, from that fell heifer there  
' Keep thou the bull :<sup>2</sup> in robes  
Entangling him, she with her weapon gores  
\* Him with the swarthy horns ;<sup>3</sup>  
Lo ! in that tub with water filled he falls,  
Smitten to death, and I to thee set forth  
Crime of a bath of blood,  
By subtlest guile devised.

ANTISTROPH. VI.

*Chor.* I will not boast that I keen insight have  
In words oracular ; yet bode I ill.  
What good bring oracles  
To mortal men ? These arts,  
In days of evils sore, with many words,

1100

<sup>1</sup> The "yellow" look of fear is thought of as being caused by an actual change in the colour of the blood as it flows through the veins to the heart.

<sup>2</sup> Here there is prevision as well as clairvoyance. The deed is not yet done. The sacrifice and the feast are still going on, yet she sees the crime in all its circumstances.

<sup>3</sup> As before (v. 115) the black eagle had been the symbol of the warrior-chief, so here the black-horned bull, that being one of the notes of the best breed of cattle. A various reading gives "with *her* swarthy horn."

Bring but a vague, dim fear oracular  
For men to learn and know.

## STROPH. VII.

*Cass.* Woe, woe! for all sore ills that fall on me!  
It is my grief thou speak'st of, blending it  
With his. [*Pausing, and then crying out.*] Ah!  
wherefore then  
Hast thou<sup>1</sup> thus brought me here,  
For nought but death with thee?  
What other doom is mine?

## STROPH. VIII.

*Chor.* Frenzied art thou, and by some God's might  
swayed,  
And utterest for thyself  
A melody which is no melody,  
Like to that tawny one,  
Insatiate in her wail,  
The nightingale, who still with sorrowing soul,  
And "Itys, Itys," cry,<sup>2</sup>  
Bemoans a life o'erflourishing in ills.

1110

## ANTISTROPH. VII.

*Cass.* Ah, for the doom of clear-voiced nightingale!

<sup>1</sup> The ecstasy of horror interrupts the tenor of her speech, and the second "thou" is addressed not to the Chorus, but to Agamemnon, whose death Cassandra has just witnessed in her vision.

<sup>2</sup> The song of the nightingale, represented by these sounds, was connected with a long legend, specially Attic in its origin. Philomela, daughter of Pandion, king of Attica, suffered outrage at the hands of Tereus, who was married to her sister Procne, and was then changed into a nightingale, destined ever to lament the fate of Itys, her sister's son. The earliest form of the story appears in the *Odyssey*, (xix. 518.) Comp. Sophocles, *Electr.* v. 148.

The Gods gave her a body bearing wings,  
 And life of pleasant days  
 With no fresh cause to weep ;  
 But for me waiteth still  
 Stroke from the two-edged sword.

ANTISTROPH. VIII.

*Chor.* From what source hast thou these dread agonies  
 Sent on thee by thy God,  
 Yet vague and little meaning ; and thy cries 1120  
 Dire with ill-omened shrieks  
 Dost utter as a chant,  
 And blendest with them strains of shrillest grief?  
 Whence treadest thou this track  
 Of evil-boding path of prophecy ?

STROPH. IX.

*Cass.* Woe for the marriage-ties, the marriage-ties  
 Of Paris that brought ruin on his friends !  
 Woe for my native stream,  
 Scamandros, that I loved !  
 Once on thy banks my maiden youth was reared,  
 (Ah, miserable me !)  
 Now by Cokytos and by Acheron's shores 1130  
 I seem too likely soon to utter song  
 Of wild, prophetic speech.

STROPH. X.

*Chor.* What hast thou spoken now  
 With utterance all too clear ?  
 \*Even a boy its gist might understand ;  
 VOL. I.

I to the quick am pierced  
 With throe of deadly pain,  
 Whilst thou thy moaning cries art uttering  
 Over thy sore mischance,  
 Wondrous for me to hear.

## ANTISTROPH. IX.

*Cass.* Woe for the toil and trouble, toil and trouble  
 Of city that is utterly destroyed !  
 Woe for the victims slain  
 Of herds that roamed the fields, 1140  
 My father's sacrifice to save his towers !  
 No healing charm they brought  
 To save the city from its present doom :  
 And I with hot thoughts wild myself shall throw  
 Full soon upon the ground.

## ANTISTROPH. X.

*Chor.* This that thou utterest now  
 With all before agrees.  
 What Power above dooms thee with purpose ill,  
 Down-swooping from on high,  
 To utter with thy voice  
 Sorrows of deepest woe, and bringing death ?  
 And what the end shall be  
 Perplexes in the extreme.

*Cass.* Nay, now no more from out of maiden veils  
 My oracle shall glance, like bride fresh wed ; 1150

<sup>1</sup> In the marriage-rites of the Greeks of the time of Æschylos, the bride for three days after the wedding wore her veil ; then, as now no longer

But seems as though 'twould rush with speedy gales  
 In full, clear brightness to the morning dawn ;  
 So that a greater woe than this shall surge  
 Like wave against the sunlight.<sup>1</sup> Now I'll teach  
 No more in parables. Bear witness ye,  
 As running with me, that I scent the track  
 Of evil deeds that long ago were wrought :  
 For never are they absent from this house,  
 That choral band which chants with one accord,  
 Yet no good music ; good is not their theme.  
 And now, as having drunk men's blood,<sup>2</sup> and so  
 Grown wilder, bolder, see, the revelling band,  
 Erinnyes of the race, still haunt the halls,  
 Not easy to dismiss. And so they sing,  
 Close cleaving to the house, its primal woe,<sup>3</sup>  
 And vent their loathing in alternate strains  
 On marriage-bed of brother ruthless found  
 To that defiler. \*Miss I now, or hit  
 Like archer skilled ? or am I seeress false,  
 A babbler vain that knocks at every door ?  
 Yes, swear beforehand, ere I die, I know

1160

shrinking from her matron life, she laid it aside and looked on her husband with unveiled face.

<sup>1</sup> The picture might be drawn by any artist of power, but we may, perhaps, trace a reproduction of one of the grandest passages in the *Iliad*, (iv. 422-426.)

<sup>2</sup> So in the *Eumenides*, (v. 293,) the Erinnyes appear as vampires, drinking the blood of their victims.

<sup>3</sup> The death of Myrtillos as the first crime in the long history of the house of Pelops. Comp. Soph. *Electr.* v. 470. The "defiler" is Thyestes, who seduced Aerope, the wife of Atreus.



(And not by rumour only) all the sins  
Of ancient days that haunt and vex this house.

*Chor.* How could an oath, how firm soe'er confirmed,  
Bring aught of healing? Lo, I marvel at thee, 1170  
That thou, though born afar beyond the sea,  
Should'st tell an alien city's tale as clear  
As though thyself had'st stood by all the while.

*Cass.* The seer Apollo set me to this task.

*Chor.* Was he, a God, so smitten with desire?

*Cass.* There was a time when shame restrained my  
speech.

*Chor.* True; they who prosper still are shy and coy.

*Cass.* He wrestled hard, breathing hot love on me.

*Chor.* And were ye one indeed whence children  
spring?

*Cass.* I cheated Loxias with a feigned consent.

*Chor.* Wast thou e'en then possessed with arts  
divine? 1180

*Cass.* E'en then my country's woes I prophesied.

*Chor.* How wast thou then unscathed by Loxias'  
wrath?

*Cass.* I for that fault with no man gained belief.

*Chor.* To us, at least, thou seem'st to speak the truth.

*Cass.* [*Again speaking wildly as in an ecstasy.*] Ah,  
woe is me! Woe's me! Oh, ills on ills!

Again the dread pang of true prophet's gift  
With foretaste of great evil dizzies me.  
See ye those children sitting on the house

In fashion like to phantom forms of dreams ? 1190  
 Infants who perished at their own kin's hands,  
 Their palms filled full with meat of their own flesh,  
 Loom on my sight, the heart and entrails bearing,  
 (A sorry burden that !) on which of old  
 Their father fed.<sup>1</sup> And in revenge for this,  
 I say a lion, dwelling in his lair,  
 With not a spark of courage, stay-at-home,  
 Plots 'gainst my master now he's home returned,  
 (Yes mine—for still I must the slave's yoke bear ;) 1200  
 And the ships' ruler, Ilion's conqueror,  
 Knows not what things the tongue of that lewd bitch  
 Has spoken and spun out in welcome smooth,  
 And, like a secret Atè, will work out  
 With dire success : thus 'tis she plans : the male  
 Is murdered by the female. By what name  
 Shall I that loathèd monster rightly call ?  
 An Amphisbæna ? or a Skylla dwelling<sup>2</sup>  
 Among the rocks, the sailors' enemy ?  
 Hades' fierce raging mother, breathing out  
 Against her friends a curse implacable ?  
 Ah, how she raised her cry, (oh, daring one !)

<sup>1</sup> The horror of the Thyestes banquet again haunts her as the source of all the evils that followed, of the deaths both of Iphigeneia and Agamemnon.

<sup>2</sup> Both words point to the Sindbad-like stories of distant marvels brought back by Greek sailors. The Amphisbæna, (double-goer,) wriggling itself backward and forward, believed to have a head at each extremity, was looked upon as at once the most subtle and the most venomous of serpents. Skylla, already famous in its mythical form from the story in the Odyssey, (xii. 85-100,) was probably a "development" of the monstrous cuttle-fish of the straits of Messina.

As in the rout of battle, and she feigns  
 To hail with joy her lord's return in safety !  
 And if thou dost not credit this, what then ?  
 What will be will. Soon, present, pitying me 1210  
 Thou 'lt own I am too true a prophetess.

*Chor.* Thyestes' banquet on his children's flesh  
 I know and shudder at ; and fear o'ercomes me,  
 Hearing not counterfeits of fact, but truths ;  
 Yet in the rest I hear and miss my path.

*Cass.* I say thou 'lt witness Agamemnon's death.

*Chor.* Hush, wretched woman, close those lips of  
 thine !

*Cass.* For this my speech no healing God 's at hand.

*Chor.* True, if it must be, but may God avert it ! 1220

*Cass.* Thou utterest prayers, but others murder plot.

*Chor.* And by what man is this woe brought to pass ?

*Cass.* Sure, thou hast seen my bodings all amiss.

*Chor.* I see not his device who works the deed.

*Cass.* And yet I know the Hellenic tongue right well.

*Chor.* So does the Pythian, yet her words are hard.

*Cass.* [*In another access of frenzy.*] Ah me, this fire !

It comes upon me now !

Ah me, Apollo, wolf-slayer ! woe is me !  
 This biped lioness who takes to bed  
 A wolf in absence of the noble lion, 1230  
 Will slay me, wretched me. And, as one  
 Mixing a poisoned draught, she boasts that she  
 Will put my price into her cup of wrath,

Sharpening her sword to smite her spouse with death,  
 So paying him for bringing me. Oh, why  
 Do I still wear what all men flout and scorn,  
 My wand and seeress-wreaths around my neck? <sup>1</sup>  
 Thee, ere myself I die, I will destroy: [*breaks her wand.*]  
 Perish ye thus; [*casting off her wreaths,*] I soon shall  
 follow you :

\*Make rich another Atè <sup>2</sup> in my place ;  
 Behold Apollo's self is stripping me 1240  
 Of my divining garments, and that too,  
 When he has seen me even in this garb  
 Scorned without cause among my friends and kin,  
 \*By foes, with no diversity of mood.  
 Reviled as vagrant, wandering prophetess,  
 Poor, wretched, famished, I endured to live.  
 And now the Seer who me a seeress made  
 Hath brought me to this lot of deadly doom.  
 Now for my father's altar there awaits me  
 A butcher's block where I am smitten down  
 By slaughtering stroke, and with hot gush of blood.  
 But the Gods will not slight us when we're dead ; 1250  
 Another yet shall come as champion for us,

<sup>1</sup> As in Homer (*Il.* i. 14) so here, the servant of Apollo bears the wand of augury, and fillets or wreaths round head and arms. The divining garments, in like manner, were of white linen.

<sup>2</sup> If we adopt this reading, we must think of Cassandra as identifying herself with the woe (Atè) which makes up her life, just as afterwards Clytemnestra speaks of herself as one with the avenging Demon (Alastor) of the house of Atreus, (1478.) The alternative reading gives, —

“ Make rich in woe another in my place.”

A son who slays his mother, to avenge  
 His father ; and the exiled wanderer  
 Far from his home, shall one day come again,  
 Upon these woes to set the coping-stone :  
 For the high Gods have sworn a mighty oath,  
 His father's fall, laid low, shall bring him back.  
 Why then do I thus groan in this new home,<sup>1</sup>  
 When, to begin with, Ilion's town I saw  
 Faring as it did fare, and they who held  
 That town are gone by judgment of the Gods ?  
 I too will fare as they, and venture death :  
 So I these gates of Hades now address,  
 And pray for blow that bringeth death at once,  
 That so with no fierce spasm, while the blood  
 Flows in calm death, I then may close mine eyes.

1260

*[Goes towards the door of the palace.]*

*Chor.* O thou most wretched, yet again most wise ;  
 Long hast thou spoken, lady, but if well  
 Thou know'st thy doom, why to the altar go'st thou,  
 Like heifer driven of God, so confidently ?<sup>2</sup> [1270]

*Cass.* For me, my friends, there is no time to 'scape.

*Chor.* Yea ; but he gains in time who comes the last.

*Cass.* The day is come : small gain for me in flight.

*Chor.* Know then thou sufferest with a heart full  
 brave.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps "in home not mine."

<sup>2</sup> When the victim, instead of shrinking and struggling, went, as with good courage, to the altar, it was noted as a sign of a divine impulse. Such a strange, new courage the Chorus notes in Cassandra.

*Cass.* Such words as these the prosperous never hear.

*Chor.* Yet mortal man may welcome glorious death.

*Cass.* [*Shrinking back from opening the door.*] Woe 's  
me for thee and thy brave sons, my father !

*Chor.* What cometh now ? What fear oppresseth thee ?

*Cass.* [*Again going to the door and then shuddering in  
another burst of frenzy.*] Fie on't, fie !

*Chor.* Whence comes this "Fie !" unless from mind  
that loathes ? [128]

*Cass.* The house is tainted with the scent of death.

*Chor.* How so ? This smells of victims on the hearth.

*Cass.* Nay, it is like the blast from out a grave.

*Chor.* No Syrian ritual tell'st thou for our house.

*Cass.* Well then I go, and e'en within will wail

My fate and Agamemnon's. And for me,  
Enough of life. Ah, friends ! Ah ! not for nought  
I shrink in fear, as bird shrinks from the brake.

When I am dead do ye this witness bear,

When in revenge for me, a woman, Death

A woman snites, and man shall fall for man

In evil wedlock wed. This kindly act,

As one about to die, I pray you do me.

*Chor.* Thy doom foretold, poor sufferer, moves my pity.

*Cass.* I fain would speak once more, yet not to wail

Mine own death-song ; but to the Sun I pray,

To his last rays, that my avengers wreak

Upon my hated murderers judgment due

For me, who die a slave's death, easy prey.

1290

Ah, life of man ! when most it prospereth,

\*It is but limned in outline ; and when brought  
To low estate, then doth the sponge, full soaked,  
Wipe out the picture with its frequent touch :  
And this I count more piteous e'en than that.<sup>1</sup>

1300

[*Passes through the door into the palace.*]

*Chor.* 'Tis true of all men that they never set  
A limit to good fortune ; none doth say,  
As bidding it depart,

\*And warding it from palaces of pride,  
“ Come thou no longer here.”

To this our lord the Blest Ones gave to take  
Priam's city ; and he comes  
Safe to his home and honoured by the Gods ;  
But if he now shall pay  
The forfeit of blood-guiltiness of old,  
And, dying, so work out for those who died,  
By his own death another penalty,

1310

Who then of mortal men,  
Hearing such things as this,  
Can boast that he was born  
With fate from evil free ?

*Agam.* [*from within.*] Ah, me ! I am struck down  
with deadly stroke.

*Chor.* Hush ! Who cries out with deadly stroke sore  
smitten ?

<sup>1</sup> Her own doom, hard as it was, touches her less than the common lot of human suffering and mutability.

*Agam.* Ah me, again ! struck down a second time !

*Chor.* By the king's groans I judge the deed is done ;  
But let us now confer for counsels safe.<sup>1</sup>

*Chor. a.* I give you my advice to summon here,  
Here, to the palace, all the citizens. 1320

*Chor. b.* I think it best to rush at once on them,  
And take them in the act with sword yet wet.

*Chor. c.* And I too give like counsel, and I vote  
For doing something. 'Tis no time to pause.

*Chor. d.* Who will see, may.—They but the prelude  
work  
Of tyranny usurped o'er all the state.

*Chor. e.* Yes, we are slow, but they who trample  
down  
The grace of hesitation slumber not.

*Chor. f.* I know not what advice to find or speak :  
He who can act knows how to counsel too. 1330

*Chor. g.* I too think with thee ; for I have no hope  
With words to raise the dead again to life.

*Chor. h.* What ! Shall we drag our life on and submit  
To these usurpers that defile the house ?

*Chor. i.* Nay, that we cannot bear : To die were  
better ;  
For death is gentler far than tyranny.

*Chor. k.* Shall we upon this evidence of groans  
Guess, as divining that our lord is dead ?

<sup>1</sup> So far the dialogue has been sustained by the Coryphæos, or leader of the Chorus. Now each member of it speaks and gives his counsel.



*Chor. l.* When we know clearly, then should we discuss :

To guess is one thing, and to know another.

1340

*Chor.<sup>1</sup>* So vote I too, and on the winning side,  
Taking the votes all round, that we should learn  
How he, the son of Atreus, fareth now.

*Enter CLYTEMNESTRA from the palace, followed  
by soldiers and attendants. The open doors  
show the corpses of AGAMEMNON and CAS-  
SANDRA, the former lying in a silvered bath.*

*Clytæm.* Though many words before to suit the time  
Were spoken, now I shall not be ashamed  
The contrary to utter : How could one  
By open show of enmity to foes  
Who seemed as friends, fence in the snares of death  
Too high to be o'erleapt ? But as for me,  
Not without forethought for this long time past,  
This conflict comes to me from triumph old <sup>2</sup>  
Of his, though slowly wrought. I stand where I 1350  
Did smite him down, with all my task well done.  
So did I it, (the deed deny I not,)  
That he could nor avert his doom nor flee :  
I cast around him drag-net as for fish,  
With not one outlet, evil wealth of robe :  
And twice I smote him, and with two deep groans

<sup>1</sup> The Coryphæos again takes up his part, sums up, and pronounces his decision.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. He had had his triumph over her when, forgetful of her mother's feelings, he had sacrificed Iphigenia. She has now repaid him to the full.

He dropped his limbs : And when he thus fell down  
 I gave him yet a third, thank-offering true<sup>1</sup>  
 To Hades of the dark, who guards the dead.  
 So fallen he gasps out his struggling soul,  
 And breathing forth a sharp, quick gush of blood,  
 He showers dark drops of gory rain on me,  
 Who no less joy felt in them than the corn,  
 When the blade bears, in glad shower given of God.  
 Since this is so, ye Argive elders here,  
 Ye, if ye will, may acquiesce, but I  
 Exult. And were it fitting now to pour  
 Libation o'er the dead,<sup>2</sup> 'twere justly done,  
 Yea, more than justly ; such a goblet full  
 Of ills hath he filled up with curses dire  
 At home, and now has come to drain it off.

*Chor.* We marvel at the boldness of thy tongue, <sup>1370</sup>  
 Who o'er thy husband's corpse speak'st vaunt like this.

*Clytæm.* Ye test me as a woman weak of mind ;  
 But I with dauntless heart to you that know  
 Say this, and whether thou dost praise or blame,  
 Is all alike :—here Agamemnon lies,  
 My husband, now a corpse, of this right hand,  
 As artist just, the handiwork : so stands it.

<sup>1</sup> The third libation at all feasts was to Zeus, as the Preserver or Guardian Deity. Clytæmnestra boasts that her third blow was as an offering to a God of other kind, to Him who had in his keeping not the living, but the dead.

<sup>2</sup> So in the *Choëphoræ*, (vv. 351, 476,) the custom of pouring libations on the burial-place of the dead is recognised as an element of their blessedness or shame in Hades, and Agamemnon is represented as lacking the honour which comes from them till he receives it at the hand of Orestes.

## STROPHE.

*Chor.* What evil thing, O Queen, or reared on earth,

Or draught from salt sea-wave

1380

Hast thou fed on, to bring

Such incense on thyself,<sup>1</sup>

And so did'st set at nought

A people's loud-voiced curse?

Yes, thou hast stricken him down,

And shalt an exile be,

Hated with strong hate of the citizens.

*Clytæm.* Ha! now on me thou lay'st the exile's doom,

My subjects' hate, and people's loud-voiced curse,

Though ne'er did'st thou oppose my husband there,

Who, with no more regard than had been due

To a brute creature, though he called his own

Full many a fleecy sheep in pastures bred,

Yet sacrificed his child, the dear-loved fruit

1390

Of all my travail-pangs, to be a charm

Against the winds of Thrakia. Should'st thou not

Have banished him from out this land of ours,

As meed for all his crimes? Yet hearing now

My deeds, thou art a judge full stern. But I

Tell thee to speak thy threats, as knowing well

I am prepared that thou on equal terms

<sup>1</sup> Incense was placed on the head of the victim. The Chorus tells Clytæmnestra that she has brought upon her own head the incense, not of praise and admiration, but of hatred and wrath, as though some poison had driven her mad.

Should'st rule, if thou dost conquer. But if God  
Should otherwise decree, then thou shalt learn,  
Late though it be, the lesson to be wise.

ANTISTROPHE.

*Chor.* Yea, thou art stout of heart, and speak'st big  
words ; 1400

And maddened is thy soul  
As by a murderous hate ;  
And still upon thy brow,  
Is seen, not yet avenged,  
The stain of blood-spot foul ;  
And yet it needs must be,  
One day thou, reft of friends,  
Shalt pay the penalty of blow for blow.

*Clytem.* Now hear thou too my oaths of solemn awe :  
By my accomplished vengeance for my child,  
By Atè and Erinnyes, unto whom  
I slew him as a victim, I look not  
That fear should come beneath this roof of mine,  
So long as on my hearth Ægisthos kindles 1410  
The flaming fire, as well disposed to me  
As he hath been aforetime. He to us  
Is no slight shield of stoutest confidence.  
There lies he, [*pointing to the corpse of AGAMEMNON,*]  
one who foully wronged his wife,  
The darling of the Chryseïds at Troïa ;  
And there [*pointing to CASSANDRA*] this captive slave,  
this auguress,

His concubine, this seeress trustworthy,  
 \* Who shared his bed, and yet was as well known  
 To the sailors as their benches ! . . . They have fared  
 Not otherwise than they deserved : for he  
 Lies as you see. And she who, like a swan,<sup>1</sup>  
 Has chanted out her last and dying song,  
 Lies, loved by him, and so to me has brought  
 A zest to give my bed a fresh delight.

1429

STROPH. I.<sup>2</sup>

*Chor.* Ah me, would death might come  
 Quickly, with no sharp throe of agony,  
 Nor long bed-ridden pain,  
 Bringing the endless sleep ;  
 Since he, the watchman most benign of all,  
 Hath now been smitten low,  
 Who by a woman's means hath much endured,  
 And at a woman's hand hath lost his life!

## STROPH. II.

Alas ! alas ! O Helen, evil-souled,

1430

<sup>1</sup> The species of swan referred to is said to be the *Cygnus Musicus*. Aristotle (*Hist. Anim.*, ix. 12) describes swans of some kind as having been heard by sailors near the coast of Libya, "singing with a lamentable cry." Mrs Somerville (*Phys. Geog.*, c. xxxiii. 3) describes their note as "like that of a violin." The same fact is reported of the swans of Iceland and other regions of the far North. The strange, tender beauty of the passage in the *Phædo* of Plato, (p. 85, a,) which speaks of them as singing when at the point of death, has done more than anything else to make the illustration one of the commonplaces of rhetoric and poetry.

<sup>2</sup> The structure of the lyrical dialogue that follows is somewhat complicated, and different editors have adopted different arrangements. I have followed Paley's.

Who, though but one, hast slain  
Many, yea, very many lives at Troia.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \*

STROPH. III.

\*But now for blood that may not be washed out  
\*Thou hast to full bloom brought  
\*A deed of guilt that no man may forget,  
For strife was in the house,  
Wrought out in fullest strength,  
Woe for a husband's life.

STROPH. IV.

*Clytæm.* Nay, pray not thou for destiny of death,  
Being grieved with what thou see'st ;  
Nor turn thou against Helena thy wrath, 1440  
As though she murderess were,  
And, though but one, had many Danaï's souls  
Brought low in death, and wrought o'erwhelming woe.

ANTISTROPH. I.

*Chor.* O Power that dost attack  
Our palace and the two Tantalidæ,<sup>2</sup>  
\*Who rul'st through women's souls,  
With sway that grieves my heart!  
See, o'er the body, like a raven foul,  
Against all laws of right,

<sup>1</sup> Several lines seem to have dropped out by some accident of transcription.

<sup>2</sup> Agamemnon and Menelaos, as descended from Tantalos.

Standing, she boasteth in her pride of heart  
That she can chant her pæan hymn of praise.

1450

## ANTISTROPH. IV.

*Clytæm.* Now thou dost guide aright thy speech and  
thought,

Invoking that dread Power,

\*The thrice-gorged evil genius of this house ;

For he it is who feeds

In the heart's depth the raging lust of blood :

Ere the old wound is healed, new bloodshed comes.

## STROPH. V.

*Chor.* Yes, of a Power thou tell'st

\*Mighty and very wrathful to this house :

Ah, me ! Ah, me ! an evil tale enough

1460

Of baleful chance of doom,

Insatiable of ill :

Yet, ah ! it is through Zeus,

The all-appointing and all-working One ;

For what with mortal men

Is wrought apart from Zeus ?

What of all this is not by God decreed ?

## STROPH. VI.

Ah, me ! Ah, me !

My king, my king, how shall I weep for thee ?

What shall I speak from heart that truly loves ?

And now thou lie'st there, breathing out thy life,

1470

In this fell spider's web,—

STROPH. VII.

(Yes, woe is me, woe, woe !  
Woe for this couch of thine dishonourable !)—  
Slain by a subtle death,  
With sword two-edged which her right hand did wield.

STROPH. VIII.

*Clytem.*      Thou say'st the deed is mine ;  
Yet think thou not of me,  
As Agamemnon's spouse ;  
But in the semblance of this dead man's wife,  
The old and keen Avenger of the house  
Of Atreus, that cruel banqueter of old,  
Hath wrought out vengeance full  
On him who lieth here,  
And full-grown victim slain  
Over the younger victims of the past.<sup>1</sup>

1499

ANTISTROPH. V.

*Chor.* That thou art guiltless found  
Of this foul murder who will witness bear ?  
How can it be so, how ? And yet, perchance,  
As helper to the deed  
The avenging Fiend might come  
Of that ancestral time ;  
And by this rush of murders of near kin  
Dark Ares presses on,

<sup>1</sup> Clytæmnestra still harps (though in ambiguous words, which may refer also to the murder of the children of Thyestes) upon the death of Iphigeneia as the crime which it had been her work to avenge.



Where he will vengeance work  
For clotted gore of children foully eaten.

1490

## ANTISTROPH. VI.

Ah me ! Ah me !

My king, my king, how shall I weep for thee ?  
What shall I speak from heart that truly loves ?  
And now thou liest there, breathing out thy life,  
In this fell spider's web,

## ANTISTROPH. VII.

(Yes, woe is me ! woe ! woe !

Woe for this couch of thine dishonourable !)  
Slain by a subtle death,  
With sword two-edged which her right hand did wield.

## ANTISTROPH. VIII.

*Clytem.* Nay, not dishonourable

His death doth seem to me :

Did he not work a doom,

In this our house with guile ?<sup>1</sup>

1500

Mine own dear child, begotten of this man,  
Iphigeneia, wept with many a tear,  
He foully slew ; now foully slain himself,  
Let him not boast in Hell,  
Since he the forfeit pays,  
Pierced by the sword in death,  
For all the evil that his hand hath wrought.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, " And that too, not a slave's."

STROPH. IX.

*Chor.* I stand perplexed in soul, deprived of power  
 Of quick and ready thought,  
 Where now to turn, since thus 1510  
 Our home is falling low.  
 I fear the pelting storm  
 Of blood that shakes the basement of the house.  
 No more it rains in drops :  
 And for another deed of mischief dire,  
 Fate whets the righteous doom  
 On other whetstones still.

ANTISTROPH. II.

O Earth ! O Earth ! Oh, would thou had'st received  
 me,  
 Ere I saw him on couch  
 Of bath with silvered walls thus stretched in death !  
 Who now will bury, who bewail ? Wilt thou,  
 When thou hast slain thy husband, mourn his death, 1520  
 And for thy monstrous deeds  
 Do graceless grace ? And who will chant the dirge  
 With tears in truth of heart,  
 Over our godlike chief ?

STROPH. X.

*Clytæm.* It is not thine to speak ;  
 'Twas at our hands he fell,  
 Yea, he fell low in death,  
 And we will bury him, 1530  
 Not with the bitter tears of those who weep

As inmates of the house ;  
 But she, his child, Iphigeneia, there  
 Shall meet her father, and with greeting kind,  
 E'en as is fit, by that swift-flowing ford,  
     Dark stream of bitter woes,  
     Shall clasp him in her arms,  
     And give a daughter's kiss.

## ANTISTROPH. IX.

*Chor.* Lo ! still reproach upon reproach doth come ;  
     Hard are these things to judge :  
     The spoiler shall be spoiled,  
     The slayer pay his debt ;  
 Yea, while Zeus liveth through the ages, this  
 Lives also that the doer bear his deed ;  
     For this is Heaven's decree.  
 Who now can drive from out the kingly house  
     The brood of curses dark ?  
     The house to Atè cleaves.

1540

## ANTISTROPH. X.

*Clytæm.* Yes, thou hast touched with truth  
     That word oracular ;  
     But I for my part wish,  
     (Binding with strongest oath  
 The evil genius of the Pleisthenids,) <sup>1</sup>  
     Though hard it be to bear,

<sup>1</sup> Here the genealogy is carried one step further to Pleisthenes, the father of Tantalos

To rest content with this our present lot ;  
And, for the future, that he go to vex  
Another race with deaths at hands of kin.

1550

Lo ! 'tis enough for me,  
Though small my share of wealth,  
At last to have freed my house  
From fratricidal hate.

*Enter ÆGISTHOS.*

*Ægis.* Hail, kindly light of day that vengeance  
brings !

Now I can say the Gods on high look down,  
Avenging men, upon the woes of earth,  
Since lying in the Erinnyes' woven robes  
I see this man, right welcome sight to me,  
Paying for deeds his father's hand had wrought.  
Atreus, our country's ruler, this man's father,  
Drove out my sire Thyestes, his own brother,  
(To tell the whole truth) quarrelling for rule,  
An exile from his country and his home.  
And coming back a suppliant on the hearth,  
The poor Thyestes found a lot secure,  
Nor did he, dying, stain the soil with blood,  
There in his home. But this man's godless sire,  
Atreus, more prompt than kindly in his deeds,  
On plea of keeping festal day with cheer,  
To my sire banquet gave of children's flesh,  
His own. The feet and finger-tips of hands

1560 ✓

1570

\*He, sitting at the top, apart concealed ;  
 And straight the other, in his blindness taking  
 The parts that could not be discerned, did eat  
 A meal which, as thou see'st, perdition works  
 For all his kin. And learning afterwards  
 The deed of dread, he groaned and backward  
 fell,

Vomits that feast of blood, and imprecates  
 On Pelops' sons a doom intolerable,  
 And turns his spurning at the festive board,  
 With fullest justice, to a general curse,  
 That so might fall the race of Pleisthenes.

1389

And now thou see'st how this man fallen lies  
 Accordingly ; and I most justly came  
 To weave the plot of murderous doom. For me,  
 While yet a babe in swaddling-clothes, he banished  
 With my poor father, me, his thirteenth child ;  
 And Justice brings me back, of full age grown :  
 And e'en far off I wrought against this man,  
 And planned the whole scheme of this dark device.  
 And so e'en death were now right good for me,  
 Seeing him into the nets of Justice fallen.

*Chor.* I honour not this arrogance in guilt,  
 Ægisthos. Thou confessest thou hast slain  
 Of thy free will our chieftain here,—that thou  
 Alone did'st plot this murder lamentable ;  
 Be sure, I say, thy head shall not escape  
 The righteous curse a people hurls with stones.

1390

*Ægisth.* Dost thou say this, though seated on the  
bench

Of lowest oarsmen, while the upper row  
Commands the ship ?<sup>1</sup> But thou shalt find, though old,  
How hard it is at such an age to learn,  
When self-control is ordered. But a prison  
And fasting pains are admirably apt, 1600  
As prophet-healers even for old age.  
Dost thou not see it, thou who look'st on this ?  
Kick not against the pricks,<sup>2</sup> lest sore pain come.

*Chor.* Thou, thou, O queen, when thy lord came  
from war,

While keeping house, thy husband's bed defiling,  
Did'st scheme this death for this our hero-chief.

*Ægisth.* These words of thine shall parents prove of  
tears :

But this thy tongue is Orpheus' opposite ;  
He with his voice led all things on for joy,  
But thou, provoking with thy childish cries,  
Shalt now be led ; and then being kept in check,  
Thou shalt appear in somewhat gentler mood. 1610

*Chor.* As though thou should'st o'er Argives ruler be,  
Who even when thou plotted'st this man's death  
Did'st lack good heart to do the deed thyself !

<sup>1</sup> The image is taken from the trireme with its three benches full of rowers. The Chorus is compared to the men on the lowest, *Ægisthos* and *Clytæmnestra* to those on the uppermost bench.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest occurrence of the proverb with which we are familiar through the history of St Paul's conversion, Acts ix. 5, xxvi. 14.

*Ægisth.* E'en so ; to work this fraud was clearly part  
 Fit for a woman. I was foe, of old  
 Suspected. But now will I with his wealth  
 See whether I his subjects may command,  
 And him who will not hearken I will yoke  
 In heavy harness as a full-fed colt,  
 Nowise as trace-horse : <sup>1</sup> but sharp hunger joined  
 With darksome dungeon shall behold him tamed. 1630

*Chor.* Why did'st not thou then, coward as thou art,  
 Thyself destroy him ? but a woman with thee,  
 Pollution to our land and our land's Gods,  
 She slew him. Does Orestes see the light,  
 Perchance, that he, brought back by Fortune's grace,  
 May for both these prove slayer strong to smite ?

*Ægisth.* Well, since thou think'st to act, not merely  
 talk,

Thou shalt know clearly . . . .

[*Calling his Guards from the palace.*]

On then, my troops, the time for deeds is come.

*Chor.* On then, let each man grasp his sword in hand.

*Ægisth.* With sword in hand, I too shrink not from  
 death. 1630

*Chor.* Thou speak'st of thy death and we hail the  
 word :

And make our own the fortune it implies.

*Clytæm.* Nay, let us not do other evil deeds,

<sup>1</sup> The trace-horse, as not under the pressure of the collar, was taken as the type of free, those that wore the yoke, of enforced submission.

Thou dearest of all friends. An ill-starred harvest  
 It is to have reaped so many. Enough of woe :  
 Let no more blood be shed : Go thou,—go ye,  
 Ye aged sires, to your allotted homes,  
 Ere ye do aught and pay the penalty ;  
 \*This that we have done ought to have sufficed ;  
 But should it prove we've had enough of ills,  
 We will accept it gladly, stricken low  
 In evil doom by heavy hand of God. ✓  
 This is a woman's counsel, if there be  
 That deigns to hear it.

*Ægisth.* But that these should fling  
 The blossoms of their idle speech at me, 1640  
 And utter words like these, so tempting Fate,  
 And fail of counsel wise, and flout their ruler . . . !

*Chor.* It suits not Argives on the vile to fawn.

*Ægisth.* Be sure, hereafter I will hunt thee down.

*Chor.* Not so, if God should guide Orestes back.

*Ægisth.* I know right well how exiles feed on hopes.

*Chor.* Prosper, wax fat, polluting right : 'tis thine.

*Ægisth.* Know thou shalt pay full price for this thy  
 folly.

*Chor.* Be bold and boast, like cock beside his mate.

*Clytæm.* Nay, care not thou for these vain howl-  
 ings ; I 1650 ✓

And thou together, ruling o'er the house,  
 Will settle all things rightly.

[*Exeunt.*





**CHOËPHORI**  
**OR**  
**THE LIBATION-POURERS.**



### ARGUMENT.

*It came to pass, after Agamemnon had been slain, that Clytæmnestra and Ægisthos ruled in Argos, and all things seemed to go well with them. Orestes, who was heir to Agamemnon, they had sent away to the care of Strophios of Phokis, and there he abode. Electra, his sister, mourned in secret over her father's death, and prayed for vengeance, but no avenger came. And when Orestes grew up to man's estate, he went to ask counsel of the God at Delphi, and the God straitly charged him to take vengeance on his father's murderers; and so he started on his journey with his trusty friend Pylades, and arrived at Argos. And it chanced that a little while before he came, the Gods sent Clytæmnestra a fearful dream, that troubled her soul greatly; and in her terror she bade Electra go with her handmaids to pour libations on the tomb of Agamemnon, that so she might appease his soul, and propitiate the Powers that rule over the dark world of the dead.*

## **Dramatis Personæ.**

**ORESTES.**

**ELECTRA.**

**CLYTÆMNESTRA.**

**ÆGISTHOS.**

**PYLADES.**

*Nurse.*

*Servant.*

*Chorus of Captive Women.*

## THE LIBATION-POURERS.

---

SCENE.—Argos, *in front of the palace of the Atreidæ.*  
*The tomb of AGAMEMNON (a raised mound of earth)*  
*is seen in the background.*

[*Enter ORESTES and PYLADES from the left ;*  
*ORESTES advances to the mound, and, as he*  
*speaks, lays on it a lock of his hair.*

*Orest.* O Hermes, of the darkness 'neath the earth,  
Who hast the charge of all thy Father's<sup>1</sup> sway,  
To me who pray deliverer, helper be ;  
For I to this land come, from exile come,  
And on the raised mound of this monument

<sup>1</sup> Hermes is invoked, (1,) as the watcher over the souls of the dead in Hades, and therefore the natural patron of the murdered Agamemnon ; (2,) as exercising an authority delegated by Zeus, and therefore capable of being, like Zeus himself, the deliverer and helper of suppliants. So Electra, further on, invokes Hermes in the same character. The line may, however, be rendered,

"Who stand'st as guardian of my father's house."

The three opening lines are noticeable, as having been chosen by Aristophanes as the special object for his satirical criticism (*Frogs.*, 1128-1176,) abounding in a good score of ambiguities and tautologies.

VOL. I.

G

I bid my father hear and list. One tress,  
 Thank-offering for the gifts that fed my youth,  
 To Inachos I consecrate, and this  
 The second, as the token of my grief ;<sup>1</sup>  
 For mine it was not, father, being by,  
 Over thy death to groan, nor yet to stretch  
 My hand forth for the burial of thy corpse.

*[As he speaks, ELECTRA, followed by a train of  
 captive women in black garments bearing  
 libations, wailing and tearing their clothes,  
 comes forth from the palace.]*

What see I now ? And what this company  
 Of women seen advancing in dark robes ?  
 What chance shall I conjecture as its cause ?

10

<sup>1</sup> The words point to the two symbolic aspects of one and the same practice. In both there are some points of analogy with the earlier and later forms of the Nazarite vow among the Jews. (1.) As being part of the body, and yet separable from it without mutilation, it became the representative of the whole man, and as such was the sign of a votive dedication. As early as Homer, it was the custom for youths to keep one long, flowing lock as consecrated, and when they reached manhood, they cut it off, and offered it to the river-god of their country, throwing it into the stream, as that to which, directly and indirectly, they owed their nurture. Here the offering is made to Inachos, as the hero-founder of Argos, identified with the river that bore his name. (2.) They shaved their head, wholly or in part, as a token of grief, and then, because true grief for the dead was an acceptable and propitiatory offering, this became the natural offering for suppliants who offered their prayers at the tombs of the departed. So in the *Aias* of Sophocles (v. 1174) Teucros calls on Eurysakes to approach the corpse of his father, holding in his hands locks of his own hair, his mother's, and that of Teucros. In the offering which Achilles makes over the grave of Patroclus of the hair which he had cherished for the river-God of his fatherland, Spercheios, we have the union of the two customs. Homer, *Il.* xxiii. 141-161.

Does a new sorrow fall upon this house ?  
Or am I right in guessing that they bring  
Libations to my father, soothing gifts  
To those beneath ? It is nought else but this ;  
E'en so, I deem, Electra comes in sight,  
By wailing grief conspicuous. Thou, O Zeus, ✓  
Grant me full vengeance for my father's death,  
And of thine own good will my helper be !  
Come, Pylades, and let us stand aside,  
That I may clearly learn what means this train  
Of women offering prayers. 20

## STROPH. I.

*Chor.* Sent from the house I come,  
With quick, sharp beatings of the hands in grief,  
To pour libations here ;  
\*And see, my cheeks with bloody marks are tracked,<sup>1</sup>  
The new-cut furrows which my nails have made,  
And evermore my heart is fed with groans ;  
And folds of mantles tied  
Across the breast are rent  
To shreds and rags in grief,  
\*Marring the grace of linen mantles fair,  
\*Of those struck down by woes that shut out  
smiles.

<sup>1</sup> After the widespread fashion of the East, the handmaids of Clytæmnestra (originally Trojan captives) had to rend their clothes, beat their breasts, and lacerate their faces till the blood came. The higher civilisation of Solon's laws had forbidden these wild, barbarous forms of grief at Athens. Plutarch, *Solon*, p. 164.



## ANTISTROPH. I.

\*Full clear a spectre came  
That made each single hair to stand on end,  
    Dream-prophet of this house,  
That in our sleep breathes out avenging wrath ;  
And from the secret chamber cried in fear  
A cry that broke the silence of the night,  
    There, where the women dwell,  
    Falling with heaviest weight ;  
    And those who judge these dreams  
Told, calling God to witness, that the souls  
Below were wroth and vexed with those that slew.

## STROPH. II.

On such a graceless deed of grace, as charm  
To ward off ill, (O Earth ! O mother kind !)  
    A godless woman now  
    Sends me with eager heart ;  
And yet I dread to utter that same prayer ;  
    What ransom has been found  
    For blood on earth once poured ?  
    Oh ! hearth all miserable !  
Oh ! utter overthrow of house and home !  
Yea, mists of darkness, sunless, loathed of men,  
    Cover both home and house  
    With its lords' bloody deaths.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

Yea, all the majesty that awed of old,  
Unchecked, unconquered, irresistible,

Thrilling the people's heart

As well as ears, is gone ;

And there are those that fear ;<sup>1</sup> and now Success

Is man's sole God and more ;

But stroke of vengeance swift

Smites some in life's clear day,

And for some tarrying long their sorrows wait

In twilight dim, on darkness' borderland,

\*And some the gloom of night,

Where nought is done, holds fast.

STROPH. III.

Because of blood that mother Earth has drunk,

The guilt of slaughter that will vengeance work

Is fixed indelibly ;

And Até, working grief,

Permits awhile the guilty one to wait,

That so he may be full and overflow

\*With all-devouring ill.

ANTISTROPH. III.

No remedy avails for him whose touch<sup>2</sup>

Comes on the bridal bed ; and water-streams,

Though all in common course

<sup>1</sup> Purposely, perhaps, obscure. They seem to say that the old reverence for Agamemnon has passed away, and instead of it there is only a slavish fear for Ægisthos. For the more acute, however, they imply that those who have cause to fear are Ægisthos and Clytæmnestra themselves.

<sup>2</sup> The words, in their generalising sententiousness, refer specially to the twofold crime of Ægisthos as an adulterer and murderer. Then, in the Epode, the Chorus justify themselves for their seeming inconsistency in thus abhorring the guilt, and yet acting as instruments of the guilty in their attempts to escape punishment.

Should flow to cleanse the guilt  
 \*Of murder that the sin-stained hand defiles,  
 \*Would yet flow all in vain  
 \*That guilt to purify.

## EPODE.

But now to me, since the high Gods have sent  
 A doom of bondage round my city's walls,  
 (For from my father's home  
 They have brought on me doom of slavery,)  
 Deeds right and wrong alike  
 ✓ Have been as things 'twas meet I should accept, 70  
 Since this slave-life began,  
 Where deeds are done by violence and force,—  
 And I must needs suppress  
 \*The bitter loathing of my inmost heart,  
 \*And now beneath my cloak I weep and wail  
 \*For all the frustrate fortunes of my lords,  
 Chilled through with secret grief.  
*Elect.* Ye handmaids, ye who deftly tend this  
 house,  
 Since ye are here companions in my task  
 As suppliants, give me your advice in this,  
 What shall I say as these funereal gifts  
 I pour? How shall I speak acceptably? 80  
 How to my father pray? What? Shall I say,  
 "I bring from loving wife to husband loved  
 Gifts"—from my mother? No, I am not bold  
 Enough for that, nor know I what to speak,

Pouring this chrim on my father's tomb,<sup>1</sup>  
 Or shall I say this prayer, as men are wont,  
 "Good recompense make thou to those who bring  
 These garlands," yea, a gift full well deserved  
 By deeds of ill? Or dumb, with ignominy  
 Like that with which he perished, shall I pour  
 Libations on the earth, and like a man  
 That flings away the lustral filth, shall I  
 Throw down the urn and walk with eyes not  
 turned?<sup>2</sup>

90

Be sharers in my counsels, O my friends;  
 A common hate we cherish in the house;  
Hide nothing in your heart through fear of man.  
Fate's doom decreed awaits alike the free,  
 And those in bondage to another's hand.  
 Speak, if thou know'st aught worthier than this.

*Chor.* Thy father's tomb as altar honouring,  
 I, as thou bidd'st, will speak my heart-thoughts  
 out!

<sup>1</sup> A mixture of meal, honey, and oil formed the half-liquid substance commonly used for these funeral libations. The "garlands" may be wreaths of flowers or fillets, or the word may be used figuratively for the libation itself, as crowning the mound in which Agamemnon lay.

<sup>2</sup> The words point to a strange Athenian custom. When a house was cleansed of that which defiled it, morally or physically, the filth was carried in an earthen vessel to a place where three ways met, and the worshipper flung the vessel behind him, and walked away without turning to look at it. To Electra's mind, the libation which her mother sends is equally unclean, and should be treated in the same way. So in *Hom. Il.*, I. 314, the Argives purify themselves, and then cast the lustral water they have used into the sea. *Lev. vi. 11*, gives us an analogous usage. Comp. also *Theocritus, Idyll, xxiv.*, vv. 92-97.

*Elect.* Speak then, as thou my father's tomb dost honour.

*Chor.* Say, as thou pour'st, good words for those that love.

*Elect.* Which of my friends shall I address as such?

*Chor.* First then thyself, and whoso hates Ægisthos.

*Elect.* Shall I for thee, as for myself, pray thus?

*Chor.* Now that thou'rt learning, judge of that thyself.

*Elect.* Whom shall I add then to this company?

*Chor.* Though far Orestes be, forget him not.

*Elect.* Right well is this: thou teachest admirably.

*Chor.* Then, mentioning those who did the deed of blood. . . .

*Elect.* What then? Dictate, and teach my ignorance.<sup>1</sup> 110

*Chor.* That there may come to them some God or man . . . .

*Elect.* Shall I "as judge" or "as avenger" say?

*Chor.* Say it out plain! "to give them death for death." . . . .

*Elect.* And is it right to ask the Gods such things?

*Chor.* Why not,—a foe with evils to requite?

*Elect.* \*O mightiest herald of the Gods on high

And those below, O Hermes of the dark,

Call thou the Powers beneath, and bid them hear

<sup>1</sup> Partly it is the youth of Electra that seeks counsel from those who have had more experience; partly she shrinks from the responsibility of being the first to utter the formula of execration.

The prayers that look towards my father's house ;  
And Earth herself, who all things bringeth forth, 120  
And rears them and again receives their fruit.  
And I to human souls libations pouring,  
Say, calling on my father, " Pity me ;  
How shall we bring our dear Orestes home ? "  
For now as sold to ill by her who bore us,  
We poor ones wander. She as husband gained  
Ægisthos, who was partner in thy death ;  
And I am as a slave, and from his wealth  
Orestes now is banished, and they wax  
Full haughty in the wealth thy toil had wrought. 130  
And that Orestes hither with good luck  
May come, I pray. Hear thou that prayer, my father !  
And to myself grant thou that I may be  
Than that my mother wiser far of heart,  
Holier in act. For us this prayer I pour ;  
And for our foes, my father, this I pray,  
That Justice may as thine avenger come, ✓  
And that thy murderers perish. Thus I place  
Midway in prayer for good that now I speak,  
My prayer 'gainst them for evil. Be thou then  
The escort<sup>1</sup> of these good things that I ask, 140  
With help of Gods, and Earth, and conquering Justice.  
With prayers like these my votive gifts I pour ;

<sup>1</sup> The word "escort" has a special reference to the function of Hermes in the unseen world. As he was wont to act as guide to the souls of the dead in their downward journey, so now Electra prays that he may lead the blessings she asks for upward from the dark depths of Earth.

[And as for you 'tis meet with cries to crown  
The pæan ye utter, wailing for the dead.]

## STROPHE.

*Chor.* \*Pour ye the pattering tear,

\*Falling for fallen lord,

\*Here by the tomb that shuts out good and ill,—

Here, where the full libations have been poured

That turn aside the curse men deprecate,

Hear me, O Thou my Dread,

150

Hear thou, O Sire, the words my dark mind speaks !

## ANTISTROPHE.

Oh, woe is me, woe, woe !

Woe, woe, and woe is me !

\*What warrior strong of spear

Shall come the house to free,

Or Ares with his Skythian bow<sup>1</sup> in hand,

Shaking its pliant strength in deeds of war,

\*Or guiding in encounter closer yet

The weapons made with hilts ?

[*During the choral ode ELECTRA goes to the mound,  
pours the libations on it, and returns holding  
in her hands the lock of hair which ORESTES  
had left there.*

<sup>1</sup> The Skythian bow, long and elastic, bending either way, like those of the Arabians, (Herod. vii. 69.) The connexion of Ares with the wild, fierce tribes of Thrakia and Skythia meets us again and again in the literature of Greece. He was the only God to whom they built temples, (Ibid., iv. 59.) They sacrificed human victims to an iron sword as his more appropriate symbol, (iv. 62.) The use of iron for weapons of war came to the Greeks from them, (*Seven ag. Th.* 729, *Proth.* 714.)

*Elect.* The gifts the earth hath drunk, my father hath them :

Now this new story come and share with me.

*Chor.* Speak on, my heart goes pit-a-pat with fear.

*Elect.* There on the tomb I see this lock cut off. <sup>160</sup>

*Chor.* What man or maid low-girdled can it claim ?

*Elect.* Full easy this for any one to guess.

*Chor.* Old as I am, may I from younger learn ?

*Elect.* None but myself could cut off lock like this.

*Chor.* Yea, foes are they that should with grief-locks mourn.

*Elect.* Yes, surely, 'tis indeed the self same hair . . . .

*Chor.* But as what tresses ? This I seek to know.

*Elect.* And he in truth is very like to me. . . . .

*Chor.* Does then Orestes send this secret gift ? <sup>1</sup>

*Elect.* It is most like those flowing locks of his. <sup>170</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It may be worth while to compare the methods adopted by the three dramatists of Greece in bringing about the recognition of the brother by the sister. (1.) Here the lock of hair in its peculiar colour and texture, resembling her own, followed by the likeness of his footsteps to hers, prepares the way first for vague anticipations, and then the robe she had made for him, leads to her acceptance of Orestes on his own discovery of himself. To this it has been objected, by Euripides in the first instance, (*Electra*, vv. 462-500), that the evidence of the colour of the hair is weak, that a young man's foot must have been larger than a maiden's, and that he could not have worn as a man the garment she had made for him as a child. It might be replied, perhaps, that there are such things as hereditary resemblances extending to the colour of the hair and the arch of the instep, and that the robe may either have been shown instead of worn, or, being worn, have been adapted for the larger growth. (2.) In the *Electra* of Sophocles the lock of hair alone convinces Chrysothemis that her brother is near at hand, (v. 900,) while *Electra* herself requires the further evidence of Agamemnon's seal, (v. 1223.) In Euripides, (v. 527,) all proofs fail till Orestes shows a scar on his brow, which his sister remembers.



*Chor.* How had he dared adventure to come hither ?

*Elect.* He sent the lock shorn off as filial gift.

*Chor.* Not less regretful than before, thy words,  
If on this soil his foot shall never tread.

*Elect.* Yea, on me too there rushed heart-surge of gall ;  
And I was smitten as with dart that pierced ;  
And from mine eyes there fall the thirsty drops  
That pour unchecked, of this full bitter flood,  
As I this lock behold. How can I think  
That any other townsman owns this hair ? 189  
Nay, she who slew . . . she did not cut it off,  
My mother . . . who towards her children shows  
A godless mood that little suits the name ;  
And yet that I should this assert outright,  
The precious gift is his whom most of men  
I love, Orestes. . . . Nay, hope flatters me.  
Alas ! Alas !

Would, herald-like, it had a kindly voice !  
So should I not turn to and fro in doubt ;  
But either it had told me with all clearness  
To loathe this tress, if cut from hated head ; 190  
Or, being of kin, had sought to share my grief,  
To deck the tomb and do my father honour.

*Chor.* Well, on the Gods we call, on those who know  
In what storms we, like sailors, now are tossed :  
But if deliverance may indeed be ours,  
From a small seed a mighty trunk may grow.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The saying is probably one of the wide-spread proverbs which imply

*Elect.* Here too are foot-prints as a second proof,  
Just like . . . . yes, close resembling those of mine.

For here are outlines of two separate feet,

His own and those of fellow-traveller,

200

And all the heels and impress of the feet,

When measured, fit well with my footsteps here . . . .

Pangs come on me, and sore bewilderment.

[*As she ceases speaking ORESTES comes forward  
from his concealment.*

*Orest.* Pray, uttering to the Gods no fruitless prayer,  
For good success in what is yet to come.

*Elect.* What profits now to me the Gods' good will?

*Orest.* Thou see'st those here whom most thou did'st  
desire.

*Elect.* Whom called I on, that thou hast knowledge of?

*Orest.* Right well I know how thou dost prize Orestes.

*Elect.* In what then find I now my prayers ful-  
filled?

210

*Orest.* Behold me ! Seek no dearer friend than I !

*Elect.* Nay, stranger, dost thou weave a snare for me ?

*Orest.* Then do I plot my schemes against myself.

*Elect.* Thou seekest to make merry with my grief.

*Orest.* With mine then also, if at all with thine.

*Elect.* Art thou indeed Orestes that I speak to ?

parables. The idea is obviously that with which we are familiar in the Gospel, "grain of mustard seed." Here, as in the "kicking against the pricks" of Acts ix. 5, xxvi. 14, and *Agam.* v. 1604, we are carried back to a period which lies beyond the range of history as that in which men took note of the analogies and embodied them in forms like this.

*Orest.* Though thou see'st him, thou'rt slow to learn  
'tis I ;

Yet when thou saw'st this lock of mourner's hair,  
And did'st the foot-prints track my feet had made,  
Agreeing with thine own, as brother's true,  
Then did'st thou deem in hope thou look'dst on me. 230  
Fit then this lock where it was cut, and see ;  
See too this woven robe, thine own hands' work,  
The shuttle's stroke, and forms of beasts<sup>1</sup> of chase.

[*ELECTRA starts, as if about to cry aloud for joy.*]

Restrain thyself, nor lose thy head for joy :  
Our dearest kin, I know, are foes to us.

*Elect.* [*embracing ORESTES*] Thou whom thy father's  
house most loves, most prays for,  
Our one sole hope, bewept with many a tear,  
Of issue that shall work deliverance !  
Thine own might trusting, thou thy father's house  
Shalt soon win back. 'O pleasant fourfold name ! 230  
I needs must speak to thee as father dear ;<sup>2</sup>  
The love I owe my mother turns to thee,  
(She with full right to me is hateful now,)  
My sister's too, who ruthlessly was slain ;  
And thou wast ever faithful brother found  
In fullest reverence. Now may Might and Right,  
And sovran Zeus as third, my helpers be !

<sup>1</sup> So in the *Odyssey*, (xix. 228,) Odysseus appears as wearing a woollen cloak, on which are embroidered the figures of a fawn and a dog.

<sup>2</sup> An obvious reproduction of the words of Andromache, (*Il.* vi. 429.)

*Orest.* Zeus ! Zeus ! be Thou a witness of our troubles,  
See the lorn brood that calls an eagle sire,  
Eagle that perished in the coils and folds 240  
Of a fell viper, and on them bereaved  
Presses gaunt famine. Not as yet full-grown  
Are they to bring their father's booty home.  
Thus it is thine to see in me and her,  
(I mean Electra) children fatherless,  
Both suffering the same exile from our home.

*Elect.* And should'st Thou havoc make of brood of sire  
Who at thine altar greatly honoured Thee,  
Whence wilt Thou get a festive offering  
From hand as free ? nor, should'st Thou bring to nought  
The eagle's nestlings, would'st Thou have at hand 250  
A messenger to bear thy will to man  
In signs persuasive. Nor, when withered up  
This royal stock shall be, will it again  
Wait on thine altars at high festivals :  
Oh, bring it back, and then Thou too wilt raise  
From low estate a lofty house, which now  
Seems to have fallen, fallen utterly.

*Chor.* Ah, children ! saviours of your father's house,  
Hush, hush, lest some one hear you, children dear,  
And for mere talking's sake report all this  
To those that rule. Ah, would I might behold them  
Lie dead 'midst oozing fir-pyre blazing high ! 260

<sup>1</sup> The words seem to imply that burning alive was known among the Greeks as a punishment for the more atrocious crimes. The "oozing

*Orest.* Nay, nay, I tell you, Loxias' oracle,  
 In strength excelling, will not fail us now,  
 That with clear voice spake often, warning me  
 Of chilling pain-throes at the fevered heart,  
 Unless my father's murderers I should chase,  
 Bidding me kill them in the self-same fashion,  
 Stirred by the wrongs that pauperise my life,  
 And said that I with many a mischief ill  
 Should pay for that fault with mine own dear life.

For making known to men the charms earth-born 270

\*That soothe the wrathful Powers,<sup>1</sup> he spake for us  
 Of woes as follows, leprous sores that creep  
 All o'er the flesh, and as with cruel jaws  
 Eat out its ancient nature, and white hairs<sup>2</sup>  
 On that foul ill to supervene : and still  
 He spake of other onsets of the Erinnyes,  
 As brought to issue from a father's blood ;  
 For the dark weapon of the Gods below  
 Winged by our kindred that lie low in death,

pitch" apparently describes something like the "*tunica molesta*" of Juvenal. (*Sat.* viii. 235.) Hesychios (s. v. *Κωνήσαι*) mentions the practice as alluded to in a lost play of Æschylos.

<sup>1</sup> The words are both doubtful and obscure. Taking the reading which I have adopted, they seem to mean that while men in general had means of propitiating the Erinnyes and other Powers for the guilt of unavenged bloodshed, Orestes and Electra had no such way of escape open to them. If they, the next of kin, failed to do their work, these would be exposed to the full storm of wrath. But a conjectural emendation of one word gives us,

" For making known to men the earth-born ills  
 That come from wrathful Powers."

<sup>2</sup> Either that old age would come prematurely, or that the hair itself would share the leprous whiteness of the flesh.

And beg for vengeance, yea, and madness too,  
And vague, dim fears at night disturb and haunt me,  
\*Seeing full clearly, though I move my brow <sup>1</sup> 234  
In the thick darkness . . . and that then my frame,  
Thus tortured, should be driven from the city  
With brass-knobbed scourge : and that for such as I  
It was not given to share the wine-cup's taste,  
Nor votive stream in pure libation poured ;  
And that my father's wrath invisible  
Would drive me from all altars, and that none  
Should take me in, or lodge with me ; at last,  
That, loathed of all and friendless, I should die,  
A wretched mummy, all my strength consumed.  
Must I not trust such oracles as these ?  
Though I trust not, the deed must yet be done ; 235  
For many motives now in one converge,—  
The God's command, great sorrow for my father ;  
My lack of fortune, this, too, urges me  
Never to leave our noble citizens,  
With glorious courage Troïa's conquerors,  
To be the subjects to two women thus ;  
Yea, his soul is as woman's : <sup>2</sup> an' it be not,  
He soon shall know the issue.

*Chor.* Grant ye from Zeus, O mighty Destinies !

<sup>1</sup> By some editors this verse is placed after v. 276, and the lines then read thus :—

“ And that he calls fresh onsets of the Erinnyes  
As brought to issue from a father's blood,  
Seeing clearly, though he move his brow in darkness ”

<sup>2</sup> Stress is laid here, as in *Agam.* 1224, on the effeminacy of the adulterer.

That so our work may end  
 As Justice wills, who takes our side at last ;  
 Now for the tongue of bitter hate let tongue  
 Of bitter hate be given. Loud and long  
 The voice of Justice claiming now her debt ;  
 And for the murderous blow  
 Let him who slew with murderous blow repay.  
 "That the wrong-doer bear the wrong he did,"  
 Thrice-ancient saying of a far-off time,<sup>1</sup>  
 This speaketh as we speak.

209

## STROPH. I.

*Orest.* O father, sire ill-starred,  
 What deed or word could I  
 Waft from afar to thee,  
 Where thy couch holds thee now,  
 \*To be a light with dark commensurate ?  
 Alike, in either case,  
 The wail that tells their praise is welcome gift  
 To those Atreidæ, guardians of our house.

210

## STROPH. II.

*Chor.* My child, my child, the mighty jaws of fire<sup>2</sup>  
 Bind not the mood and spirit of the dead ;

<sup>1</sup> The great law of retribution is repeated from *Agam.* 1564. As one of the earliest utterances of man's moral sense, it was referred popularly among the Greeks to Rhadamanthos, who with Minos judged the souls of the dead in Hades. Comp. Aristot. *Ethic. Nicom.*, v. 8.

<sup>2</sup> The funeral pyre, which consumes the body, leaves the life and power of the man untouched. The spirit survives, and calls on the Gods that dwell in darkness to avenge him. The very cry of wailing tends, as a prayer to them, to the exposure of the murderer.

But e'en when that is past he shows his wrath.

When he that dies is wailed,

The murderer stands revealed :

389

The righteous cry for parents that begat,

To fullest utterance roused,

Searches the whole truth out.

ANTISTROPH. I.

*Elect.* Hear then, O father, now

Our tearful griefs in turn ;

From us thy children twain

The funeral wail ascends ;

And we, as suppliants and as exiles too,

Find shelter at thy tomb.

What of all this is good, what void of ills ?

390

Is not this now a woe invincible ?

*Chor.* Yet, even yet, from evils such as these,

God, if He will, may bring more pleasant strains ;

And for the dirge we utter by the tomb,

A pæan in the royal house may raise,

Welcome to new-found friend.

STROPH. III.

*Orest.* Had'st thou beneath the walls

Of Ilion, O my sire,

Been slain by Lykian foe,<sup>1</sup>

Pierced through and through with spear,

Leaving high fame at home,

391

<sup>1</sup> The Lykians, of whom Glaucos and Sarpedon are the representative heroes in the *Iliad*, are named as the chief allies of the Trojans.



And laying strong and sure  
 \*Thy children's paths in life,  
 Then had'st thou had as thine  
 Far off across the sea  
 A mound of earth heaped high,  
 To all thy kith and kin endurable.

ANTISTROPH. II.

*Chor.* Yea, and as friend with friends  
 That nobly died, he then  
 Had dwelt in high estate  
 A sovereign ruler, held  
 Of all in reverence,  
 High in their train who rule  
 Supreme in that dark world ;  
 For he, too, while he lived,  
 As monarch ruled o'er those  
 Whose hands the sceptre held  
 That mortal men obey.<sup>1</sup>

350

ANTISTROPH. III.

*Elect.* Not even 'neath the walls  
 Of Troïa, O my Father,  
 With those the spear hath slain,  
 Would I have had thee lie  
 By fair Scamandros' stream :  
 No, this my prayer shall be

<sup>1</sup> The words embody the wide-spread feeling that the absence of funeral honours affected the spirit of the dead, and that the souls with whom he dwelt held him in high or low esteem according as they had been given or withheld.

That those who slew thee fall,  
 \*By dearest friends struck down,  
 That one might hear far off,  
 Untried by woes like this,

360

The fate that brings inevitable death.

*Chor.* Of blessings more than golden, O my child,  
 Greater than greatest fortune, or the bliss  
 Of those beyond the North<sup>1</sup> thou speakest now ;

For this is in thy power ;  
 But hold ; e'en now this thud of double scourge<sup>2</sup>  
 Finds its way on to him ;

Already these find helpers 'neath the earth,  
 But of those rulers whom we loathe and hate

Unholy are the hands :

370

And children gain the day.

STROPH. IV.

*Elect.* Ah ! this, like arrow, pierces through the ear !  
 O Zeus ! O Zeus ! who sendest from below

A woe of tardy doom

Upon the bold and subtle hands of men . . . . .

Nay, though they parents be,  
 Yet all shall be fulfilled.

<sup>1</sup> Pindar, (*Pyth.* x. 47,) the contemporary of Æschylos, had made the name of these Hyperborei well known to all Greeks. The vague dreams of men, before the earth had been searched out, pictured a happy land as lying beyond their reach. There were Islands of the Blest in the far West ; Æthiopians, peaceful and long-lived, in the South ; and far away, beyond the cold North, a people exempt from the common evils of humanity. The latter have been connected with the old Aryan belief in the paradise of Mount Meru. Comp. also Herod. iv. 421, *Prom.* 812,

<sup>2</sup> *Sc.*, the beating of both hands upon the breast.

## STROPH. V.

*Chor.* May it be mine to chant o'er funeral pyre  
 \* Cry well accordant with the pine-fed blaze,<sup>1</sup>  
 When first the man is slain,  
 And his wife perisheth ! 390  
 Why should I hide what flutters round my heart ?  
 On my heart's prow a blast blows mightily,  
 Keen wrath and loathing fierce.

## ANTISTROPH. IV.

*Orest.* And when shall Zeus, the orphan's guardian  
 true,  
 Lay to his hand and smite the guilty heads ?  
 So may our land learn faith !  
 Vengeance I claim from those who did the wrong. 390  
 Hear me, O Earth, and ye,  
 \* Powers held in awe below !

*Chor.* Yes, it is meet that gory drops once shed  
 Upon the ground for yet more blood should crave ;  
 For lo ! Erinnyes loud on Havoc calls,  
 To join the woe of those that fell of old,  
 Which on one sorrow yet another brings.

## STROPH. VI.

*Elect.* \* Ah, ah, O Earth, and Lords of those below !  
 Behold, ye mighty Curses of the slain,  
 Behold the remnant of the Atreidæ's house

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, simply "the sharp and bitter cry." But the rendering in the text seems justified as repeating the wish already expressed (v. 280) that the murderers may die by this form of death.

Brought to extremest strait,  
Bereaved of house and home !  
Whither, O Zeus, can any turn for help ?

ANTISTROPH. V.

*Chor.* Ah, my fond heart is quivering in dismay,  
\*Hearing this wailing cry of bitter grief :  
Now have I little cheer,  
And blackened is my heart,  
\*Hearing that speech ; but then again when hope  
\*On strength uplifts me, far it drives my grief,  
\*Appearing full of grace.

ANTISTROPH. VI.

*Orest.* What could we speak more fitly than the  
woes  
We suffer, yes, and from a parent's hands ?  
Well, she may fawn ; our mood remains unsoothed ;  
For like a wolf untamed,  
We from our mother take  
A wrathful soul that to no fawning yields.

STROPH. VII.

*Chor.* \*I strike an Arian stroke, and in the strain  
Of Kissian mourner skilled,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By some critics this speech and Antistroph. VII. are assigned to Electra, Antistroph. VIII. to the Chorus, with a corresponding change in the pronouns "my" and "thy." The Chorus, as consisting of Trojan captives, is represented as adopting the more vehement Asiatic forms of wailing. Among these the Arians, Kissians, and Mariandynians (*Pers.*, 920) seem to have been most conspicuous for their skill in lamentation, and as such were in request where hired mourners were wanted. Compare the opening chorus, v. 22.

Ye might have seen the stretching forth of hands,  
With rendings of the hair, and random blows,

In quick succession given,  
Dealt from above with arm at fullest length,  
And with the beating still my head is stunned, 420  
Battered and full of woe.

*Elect.* O mother, hostile found, and daring all !  
With burial as of foe  
Thou had'st the heart a ruler to inter,  
His citizens not there,  
A spouse unwept, with no lamentings loud.

## STROPH. VIII.

*Orest.* Ah ! thou hast told the whole full tale of  
shame ;  
Shall she not pay then for that outrage dire  
Unto my father done,  
So far as Gods prevail,  
So far as my hands work ?  
May it be mine to smite her and then die ! 430

## ANTISTROPH. VII.

*Chor.* Yea, he was maimed !<sup>1</sup> (that thou the tale  
may'st know)  
And as she slaughtered, so she buried him,  
Seeking to work a doom

<sup>1</sup> The practice of mutilating the corpse of a murdered man by cutting off his hands and feet and fastening them round his waist, seems to have been looked on as rendering him powerless to seek for vengeance. *Comp. Soph. Elect.*, v. 437. This kind of mutilation, and not mere wanton outrage, is what the Chorus here refer to.

For thy young life all unendurable.

Now thou dost hear the woes

Thy father suffered, stained with foulest shame.

ANTISTROPH. VIII.

*Elect.* Thou tellest of my father's death, but I

Stood afar off, contemned,

Counted as nought, and like an unsafe dog

Shut up within, I poured the tide of tears

(More ready they than smiles)

Uttering in secret wail of weeping full.

440

Hear thou these things, and write them in thy mind.

*Chor.* Let the tale pierce thine ears,

While thy soul onward moves with tranquil step :

So much, thou know'st, stands thus ;

Thyself seek eagerly to know the rest ;

'Tis meet to enter now

Within the lists with mind inflexible.

STROPH. IX.

*Orest.* I bid thee, O my father, help thy friends.

*Elect.* Bitterly weeping, these my tears I add.

*Chor.* So all-consentient cries this company.

Come then to light, and hear ;

450

Be with us 'gainst our foes.

ANTISTROPH. IX.

*Orest.* My strength their strength, my Right their

Right shall meet.

*Elect.* \* Ye Gods, give righteous issue in that cause.

*Chor.* Fear creeps upon me as I hear your prayers.

Long waits the destined doom,  
But comes for those who pray.

STROPH. X.

*Semi-Chor. A.* Oh, woe that haunts the race,  
And harsh, shrill stroke of Atè's bloody scourge !

Woes sad and hard to bear,  
Calling for wailing loud,  
Ah, woe is me, a grief immedicable.

460

ANTISTROPH. X.

*Semi-Chor. B.* Yea, but as cure for this,  
And healing salve, 'tis yours with your own hands,

With no help from without,  
\*To stir the strife of blood ;  
So runs our hymn to those great Gods below.

*Chor.* Yea, hearing now, ye blest Ones 'neath the  
earth,

This prayer, send ye your children timely help  
That worketh victory.

*Orest.* O sire, who in no kingly fashion died'st,  
Hear thou my prayer ; grant victory o'er this house.

470

*Elect.* I, father, ask this prayer, that I may work  
\* Ægisthos' death, and then acquittal gain.

*Orest.* Yea, thus the banquets that men give the dead  
Would for thee too be held, but otherwise

\* Dishonoured wilt thou lie 'mid those that feast,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As in v. 351 the loss of honour among the dead was represented as one consequence of the absence of funeral rites from those who loved the dead, so here the restoration of the children to their rights appears as the condition without which that dishonour must continue. If they succeed, then,

Robbed of thy country's rich burnt-offerings.

*Elect.* I too from out my father's house will bring  
Libations from mine own inheritance,  
As marriage offerings. Chief and first of all,  
Will I do honour to this sepulchre. [ 480

*Orest.* Set free my sire, O Earth, to watch the battle.

*Elect.* O Persephassa, goodly victory grant !

*Orest.* Remember, sire, the bath in which they slew  
thee !

*Elect.* \*Remember thou the net they handselled so !

*Orest.* In fetters not of brass wast thou snared,  
father.

*Elect.* Yea, basely with that mantle they devised.

*Orest.* Art thou not roused by these reproaches,  
father ?

*Elect.* Dost thou not lift thine head for those thou  
lov'st ?

*Orest.* Or send thou Justice to assist thy friends ;  
Or let them get like grasp of those thy foes,  
If thou, o'ercome, dost wish to conquer them. 490

*Elect.* And hear thou this last prayer of mine, my  
father,

Seeing us thy nestlings sitting at thy tomb,  
Have mercy on thy boy and on thy girl ;  
Nor blot thou out the seed of Pelopids :

and then only, can they offer funeral banquets, year by year, as was the custom. There may be a special reference to an Argive custom mentioned by Plutarch (*Quæst. Græc.* c. 24) of sacrificing immediately after the death of a relative to Apollo, and thirty days later to Hermes.



So thou, though thou hast died, art yet not dead ;  
 For children are the voices that preserve  
 Man's memory when he dies. So bear the net  
 The corks that float the flax-mesh from the deep.  
 Hear thou : This is our wailing cry for thee,  
 And thou, this prayer regarding, sav'st thyself. 501

*Chor.* Unblamed have ye your utterance lengthened  
 out,

Amends for that his tomb's unwept-for lot.  
 But as to what remains, since thou'rt resolved  
 To act, act now ; make trial of thy Fate.

*Orest.* So shall it be. Yet 'tis not out of course  
 To ask why she libations sent, why thus  
 Too late she cares for ill she cannot cure ?  
 Yea, to a dead man heeding not 'twas sent,  
 A sorry offering. Why, I fail to guess :  
 The gifts are far too little for the fault ; 510  
 For should a man pour all he has to pay  
 For one small drop of blood, the toil were vain :  
 So runs the saying. But if thou dost know,  
 Tell this to me as wishing much to learn.

*Chor.* I know, my child, for I was by. Stirred on  
 By dreams and wandering terrors of the night,  
 That godless woman these libations sent.

*Orest.* And have ye learnt the dream, to tell it right ?

*Chor.* As she doth say, she thought she bare a snake.

*Orest.* How ends the tale, and what its outcome  
 then ?

*Chor.* She nursed it, like a child, in swaddling clothes. 520

*Orest.* What food did that young monster crave for then ?

*Chor.* She in her dream her bosom gave to it.

*Orest.* How 'scaped her breast by that dread beast unhurt ?

*Chor.* Nay, with the milk it sucked out clots of blood.

*Orest.* This dream comes from her lord, and not in vain.

*Chor.* She, roused from sleep, cries out all terrified,  
And many torches that were quenched in gloom  
Blazed for our mistress' sake within the house.  
Then these libations for the dead she sends,  
Hoping they'll prove good medicine of ills. 530

*Orest.* Now to Earth here and my sire's tomb I pray,  
They leave not this strange vision unfulfilled,  
So I expound it that it all coheres ;  
For if, the self-same spot that I left leaving,  
\* The snake was then wrapt in my swaddling clothes,  
And sucked the very breast that nourished me,  
And mixed the sweet milk with a clot of blood,  
And she in terror wailed the strange event,  
So must she, as that monster dread she nourished,  
Die cruel death : and I, thus serpentised, 540  
Am here to slay her, as this dream portends ;  
And thee as augur of these things I take.

*Chor.* So be it ; but in all else guide thy friends ;

\*Bid some do this, some that, some nought at all.

*Orest.* Simple my orders, that she [*pointing to*  
ELECTRA] go within ;

And you, I charge you, hide these plans of mine,  
That they who slew a noble soul by guile,  
By guile may die and in the self-same snare  
Be caught, as Loxias gave his oracle,  
The king Apollo, seer that never lied : 55  
For like a stranger in full harness clad  
Will I draw near with this man, Pylades,  
To the great gates, a stranger I, and he,  
Ally in arms. And then we both will speak  
Parnassian speech, and imitate the tone  
Of Phokian tongue. And should no porter there  
Give us good welcome, on the ground that now  
The house with ills is haunted, there we'll stay,  
So that a man who passeth by the house  
Will guess, and thus will speak, " Why drives Ægisthos  
The suppliant from his gate, if he's at home [<sup>560</sup>  
And knows it?" But if I should pass the thresh-  
hold

Of the great gate, and find him seated there  
Upon my father's throne, or if he comes  
And meets me, face to face, and lifts his eyes,  
And drops them, then be sure, before he says,  
" Whence is this stranger?"—I will lay him dead,  
With my swift-footed brazen weapon pierced ;  
And then Erinnys, stinted not in slaughter,

Shall drink her third draught of unmingled blood.<sup>1</sup>

Thou, then, [*to ELECTRA*] watch well what passes in  
the house, 570

So that these things may dovetail close and well :

And you [*to the Chorus*] I bid to keep a tongue discreet,  
Silent, if need be, or the right word speaking,

And Him [*pointing to the statue of Apollo*] I call to look  
upon me here,

Since he has set me on this strife of swords.

[*Exeunt ORESTES, PYLADES, and ELECTRA.*]

STROPH. I.

*Chor.* Many dread forms of evils terrible

Earth bears, and Ocean's bays

With monsters wild and fierce

\* O'erflow, and through mid-air the meteor lights 580

Sweep by ; and wingèd birds

And creeping things can tell the vehement rage

Of whirling storms of winds.

ANTISTROPH. I.

But who man's temper overbold may tell,

Or daring passionate loves

Of women bold in heart,

Passions close bound with men's calamities ?

Love that true love disowns,

That sways the weaker sex in brutes and men, 590

Usurps o'er wedlock's ties.

<sup>1</sup> Another reference to the third cup of undiluted wine which men drank to the honour of Zeus the Preserver. *Comp. Agam. v. 245.*

## STROPH. II.

Whoso is not bird-witted, let him think  
 What scheme she learnt to plan,  
 Of subtle craft that wrought its will by fire,  
 That wretched child of Thestios, who to slay  
     Her son did set a-blaze  
     The brand that glowed blood-red,  
 Which had its birth when first from out the womb  
     He came with infant's wail,  
 And spanned the measure of its life with his,  
     On to the destined day.<sup>1</sup>

## ANTISTROPH. II.

Another, too, must we with loathing name,  
     Skylla, with blood defiled,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The story of Althæa has recently been made familiar to English readers by Mr Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*. More briefly told, the legend ran that she, being the wife of Œneus, bare a son, who was believed to be the child of Ares—that the Fates came to her when the boy, who was named Meleagros, was seven days old, and told her that his life should last until the firebrand then burning on the earth should be consumed. She took the firebrand, and quenched it, and laid it by in a chest; but when Meleagros grew up, he joined in the chase of the great boar of Calydon, and when he had slain it, gave the skin as a trophy to Atalanta, and when his mother's brothers, the sons of Thestios, claimed it as their right, he waxed wroth with them and slew them. And then Althæa, in her grief, caring more for her brothers than her son, took the brand from the chest, and threw it into the fire, and so Meleagros died. Phrynichos is said to have made the myth the subject of a drama. In Homer (*Il.* x. 566,) Althæa brings about her son's death by her curses.

<sup>2</sup> Skylla (not to be confounded with the sea-monster of Messina) was the daughter of Nisos, king of Megaris, who had on his head a lock of purple hair, which was a charm that preserved his life from all danger. And the Cretans under Minos attacked Nisos, and besieged him in his city; and Minos won the love of Skylla, and tempted her with gifts,

Who for the sake of foes a dear one slew,  
 Won by the gold-chased bracelets brought from Crete,  
     The gifts that Minos gave,  
     And knowing not the end,  
 Robbed Nisos of his lock of deathless life,  
     She with her dog-like heart 610  
 Surprising him deep-breathing in his sleep ;  
     But Hermes comes on her.<sup>1</sup>

STROPH. III.

Yet since I tell the tale of ruthless woes,  
     And now 'tis not the time  
 \*To tell of evil marriage which this house  
     Doth loathe and execrate,  
 And of a woman's schemes and stratagems  
     Against a warrior chief,  
 \*Chief whom his people honoured as was meet,  
 I give my praise to hearth from hot broils free,  
     And praise that woman's mood  
     Which boldness harbours not.

ANTISTROPH. III.

But of all crimes the Lemnian foremost stands,<sup>2</sup> 620  
     \*And the Earth mourns that woe  
 As worthy of all loathing. Yes, *this* guilt

and she cut off her father's lock of hair, and so he perished. But Minos, scorning her for her deed, bound her by the feet to the stern of his ship and drowned her.

<sup>1</sup> Hermes, *i.e.* in his office as the escort of the souls of the dead to Hades.

<sup>2</sup> The story of the Lemnian women is told by Herodotos, (vi. 138.) They rose up against their husbands and put them all to death ; and the deed passed into a proverb, so that all great crimes were spoken of as Lemnian.

One might have well compared  
 With Lemnian ills ; and now that race is gone,  
 To lowest shame brought down  
 By the foul stain the Gods abominate :  
 For no man honours what the Gods condemn.  
 Which instance of all these  
 Do I not rightly urge ?

## STROPH. IV.

And now the sword already at the heart,  
 Sharp-pointed, strikes a blow that pierces through,  
 While Justice guides the hand ;  
 For lo ! the lawlessness  
 Of one who doth transgress all lawlessly  
 The might and majesty of Zeus, lies not  
 As trampled under foot.

## ANTISTROPH. IV.

The anvil-block of Justice firm is set,  
 And Fate, the sword-smith, hammers on the bronze  
 Beforehand ; and the child  
 Is brought unto his home,  
 And in due time the debt of guilt is paid  
 By old Erinnys, famed for counsel deep,  
 For blood of former days.

[ORESTES and PYLADES enter, disguised as Phokians  
 travellers, go to the door of the palace, and  
 knock loudly.

*Orest.* What ho, boy ! hear us knocking at the  
 gate.

Who is within, boy ? who, boy ?—hear, again ;  
A third time now I give my summons here,  
If good Ægisthos' house be hospitable.

[*A Slave opens the door.*

*Slave.* Let be ; I hear. What stranger comes, and  
whence ?

*Orest.* Tell thou thy lords who over this house rule,  
To whom I come and tidings new report ;  
And make good speed, for now the dusky car  
Of night comes on apace, and it is time  
For travellers in hospitable homes  
To cast their anchor ; and let some one come  
From out the house who hath authority ;  
The lady, if so be one ruleth here,  
But, seemlier far, her lord ; for then no shame  
In converse makes our words obscure and dim ;  
But man with man gains courage to speak out,  
And makes his mission manifest as day.

*Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.*

*Clytæm.* If ye need aught, O strangers, speak ; for here  
Is all that's fitting for a house like ours ;  
Warm baths,<sup>1</sup> and bed that giveth rest from toil,  
And presence of right honest faces too ;  
And if there be that needeth counsel more,  
This is our lords' work and to them we'll tell it.

*Orest.* A Daulian traveller, from Phokis come,

<sup>1</sup> So in Homer, (*Il.* xxii. 444,) the warm bath is prepared by Andromache for Hector on his return from the battle in which he fell.



Am I, and as I went on business bound,  
My baggage with me, unto Argos, (just  
As I set forth,) I met a man I knew not,  
Who knew not me, and he then, having asked  
My way and told me his, the Phokian Strophios  
(For so I learnt in talking) said to me,  
“Since thou dost go, my friend, for Argos bound,  
In any case, tell those who gave him birth,  
Remembering it right well, Orestes’ death ;  
See thou forget it not, and whether plans  
Prevail to fetch him home, or bury him  
There where he is, a stranger evermore,  
Bear back the message as thy freight for us ;  
For now the ribbed sides of an urn of bronze  
The ashes hide of one whom men have wept.”  
So much I heard and now have told ; and if  
I speak to kin that have a right in him  
I know not, but his father sure should know it.

679

*Clytæm.* Ah, thou hast told how utterly our ruin  
Is now complete ! O Curse of this our house  
Full hard to wrestle with ! How many things,  
Though lying out of reach, thou aimest at,  
And with well-darted arrows from afar  
Dost bring them low ! And now thou strippest me,  
Most wretched one, of all that most I loved.  
A lucky throw Orestes now was making,  
Getting his feet from out destruction’s slough ;  
But now the hope of high, exulting joy,

680

\* Which this house had as healer, he scores down  
As present in this fashion that we see.

*Orest.* I could have wished to come to prosperous hosts,  
As known and welcomed for my tidings good ;  
For who to hosts is friendlier than a guest ? 690  
But 'twould have been as impious in my thoughts  
Not to complete this matter for my friends,  
By promise bound and pledged as guest to host.

*Clytæm.* Thou shalt not meet with less than thou  
deserv'st ;  
Nor wilt thou be to this house less a friend ;  
Another would have brought news all the same :  
But since 'tis time that strangers who have made  
A long day's journey find the things they need,  
Lead him [*to her Slave, pointing to ORESTES*] to these  
our hospitable halls,  
And these his fellow-travellers and servants. 700  
There let them meet with what befits our house.  
I bid thee act as one who gives account ;  
And we unto the masters of our house  
Will tell this news, and with no lack of friends  
Deliberate of this calamity.<sup>1</sup>

[*Exeunt* CLYTÆMNESTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES,  
and Attendants.]

<sup>1</sup> As in her speeches in the *Agamemnon*, (vv. 595, 884,) Clytæmnestra's words here also are full of significant ambiguity. The "things that befit the house," the proposed conference with Ægisthos, her separation of Orestes from his companions, are all indications of suspicion already half-aroused. The last three lines were probably spoken as an "aside."

*Chor.* Come then, handmaids of the palace,  
 When shall we with mighty voices  
 Shew our feeling for Orestes ?  
 O earth revered ! thou ridge revered, too,  
 Of the mound piled o'er the body  
 Of our navy's kingly captain, 710  
 Oh, hear us now ; oh, come and help us ;  
 For 'tis time for subtle Suasion<sup>1</sup>  
 To go with them to the conflict,  
 And that Hermes act as escort,  
 He who dwells in earth's deep darkness,  
 In the strife where swords work mischief.

*Enter KILISSA.*

*Chor.* The stranger seems about to work some ill ;  
 And here I see Orestes' nurse in tears.  
 Where then, Kilissa, art thou bound, that thus  
 Thou tread'st the palace-gates, and with thee comes  
 Grief as a fellow-traveller unbidden ? 720

*Kilis.* Our mistress bids me with all speed to call  
 Ægisthos to the strangers, that he come  
 And hear more clearly, as a man from man,  
 This newly-brought report. Before her slaves,  
 Under set eyes of melancholy cast,  
 She hid her inner chuckle at the events  
 That have been brought to pass—too well for her,  
 But for this house and hearth most miserably,—

<sup>1</sup> Suasion is personified, and invoked to come and win Clytemnestra to trust herself in the power of the two avengers.

As in the tale the strangers clearly told.  
He, when he hears and learns the story's gist,  
Will joy, I trow, in heart. Ah, wretched me ! 730  
How those old troubles, of all sorts made up,  
Most hard to bear, in Atreus' palace-halls  
Have made my heart full heavy in my breast !  
But never have I known a woe like this.  
For other ills I bore full patiently,  
But as for dear Orestes, my sweet charge,  
Whom from his mother I received and nursed . . . .  
And then the shrill cries rousing me o' nights,  
And many and unprofitable toils  
For me who bore them. For one needs must rear  
The heedless infant like an animal, 740  
(How can it else be ?) as his humour serves.  
For while a child is yet in swaddling clothes,  
\*It speaketh not, if either hunger comes,  
Or passing thirst, or lower calls of need ;  
And children's stomach works its own content.  
And I, though I foresaw this, call to mind  
How I was cheated, washing swaddling clothes,  
And nurse and laundress did the self-same work.  
I then with these my double handicrafts,  
Brought up Orestes for his father dear ;  
And now, woe's me ! I learn that he is dead, 750  
And go to fetch the man that mars this house :  
And gladly will he hear these words of mine.

*Chor.* And how equipped then doth she bid him come ?

*Nurse.* 'How?' Speak again, that I may better learn.

*Chor.* By spear-men followed, or himself alone?

*Nurse.* She bids him bring his guards with lances armed.

*Chor.* Nay, say not that to him thy lord doth hate,  
But bid him 'come alone,' (that so he hear  
Without alarm,) full speed, with joyous mind,  
Since 'secret speech with messengers goes best.' 760

*Nurse.* And art thou of good cheer at this my tale?

*Chor.* But what if Zeus will turn the tide of ill?

*Nurse.* How so? Orestes, our one hope, is gone.

*Chor.* Not yet; a sorry seer might know thus much.

*Nurse.* What say'st thou? Know'st thou aught be-  
sides my tale?

*Chor.* Go, tell thy message; do thine errand well:  
The Gods for what they care for, care enough.

*Nurse.* I then will go, complying with thy words:  
May all, by God's gift, end most happily!

STROPH. I.

*Chor.* Now to my prayer, O Father of the Gods 770  
Of high Olympus, Zeus,  
Grant that their fortune may be blest indeed  
\*Who long to look on goodness prospering well,  
Yea, with full right and truth  
I speak the word—O Zeus, preserve thou him!

STROPH. II.

Yea, Zeus, set him whom now the palace holds,  
Set him above his foes;  
For if thou raise him high,

Then shalt thou have, to thy heart's full content  
Payment of two-fold, three-fold recompense.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Know that the son of one who loved thee well

780

\*Like colt of sire bereaved,

\*Is to the chariot of great evils yoked,

\*And set thy limit to his weary path.

\*Ah, would that one might see

\*His outstretched footsteps, as he treads his course,

\*Keeping due measure through this plain of ours!

STROPH. III.

And ye within the gate,

Ye Gods, in purpose one,

Who dwell in shrines enriched

With all good things, come ye,

And now with vengeance fresh

Atone for murder foul

Of those that fell long since :

790

\*And let that blood of old,

When these are justly slain,

Breed no more in our house.

MESODE.

O Thou<sup>1</sup> that dwellest in the cavern vast,

Adorned with goodly gifts,

Grant our lord's house to look up yet once more,

And that it now look up

In free and glorious guise

<sup>1</sup> Apollo in the shrine at Delphi.

With loving kindly eyes,  
 From out its veil of gloom.  
 Let Maia's son<sup>1</sup> too give  
 His righteous help, and waft  
 Good end with prosperous gale.

## ANTISTROPH. III.

And things that now are hid,  
 He, if he will, will bring  
 As to the daylight clear ;  
 But when it pleases him  
 Dark, hidden words to speak,  
 As in thick night he bears  
 Black gloom before his face ;<sup>2</sup>  
 Nor is he in the day  
 One whit more manifest.

## STROPH. IV.

\*And then our treasured store,  
 \*The price as ransom paid  
 To free the house from ill,  
 A woman's gift on breath  
 Of favouring breeze onborne,  
 We then with clamorous cry,  
 To sound of cithern sweet,  
 Will in the city pour ;  
 And if this prospers well,  
 \*My gains, yea, mine 'twill swell, and Atè then  
 From those I love stands far.

<sup>1</sup> Hermes invoked once more, as at once the patron of craft and the escort  
 of the dead.

<sup>2</sup> Or "before our eyes."

ANTISTROPH. II.

But thou, take courage, when the time is come  
For action, and cry out,  
Shouting thy Father's name,  
When she shall cry aloud the name of "son,"  
And work thou out a woe that none will blame.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

And have thou in thy breast  
The heart that Perseus had,<sup>1</sup>  
And for thy friends beneath,  
And those on earth who dwell,  
Go thou and work the deed  
Acceptable to them  
Of bitter, wrathful mood,  
And consummate within  
\*The loathly work of blood ;  
[And calling on the Right as thine ally,]  
Destroy the murderer.

811

*Enter ÆGISTHOS.*

*Ægis.* Not without summons came I, but by word  
Of courier fetched, and learn that travellers bring  
Their tale of tidings new, in no wise welcome.  
As for Orestes' death, with it to charge  
The house would be a burden dropping fear

<sup>1</sup> As Perseus could only overcome the Gorgon, Medusa, by turning away his eyes, lest looking on her he should turn to stone, so Orestes was to avoid meeting his mother's glance, lest that should unman him and blunt his purpose.



To one by that old bloodshed sorely stung.<sup>1</sup>  
 How shall I count these things ? As clear and true ?  
 Or are they vague reports of woman's fears,  
 That leap up high and die away to nought ?  
 What can'st thou say that will my mind inform ?

*Chor.* We heard, 'tis true ; but go thou in and ask  
 Of these same strangers. Nought is found in words  
 Of messengers like asking them one's-self.

*Ægis.* I wish to see and probe the messenger,  
 If he himself were present at the death,  
 Or tells it hearing of a vague report :  
 They shall not cheat a mind with eyes wide open.

[*Exit.*

*Chor.* Zeus ! Zeus ! what words shall I  
 Now speak, whence start in prayer,  
 Invoking help of Gods ?  
 How with all wish for good  
 Shall I speak fitting words ?  
 For now the sharp sword-points,  
 Red with the blood of man,  
 Will either work for aye  
 The utter overthrow  
 Of Agamemnon's house,  
 Or, kindling fire and torch  
 For freedom thus achieved,

<sup>1</sup> *Ægisthos* had suffered enough, he says, for his share in *Agamemnon's* death. He has no wish that fresh odium should fall on him, as being implicated also in the death of *Orestes*, of which he has just heard.

Will he the sceptre wield  
Of duly-ordered sway,  
His father's pride and state :  
Such is the contest he,  
Orestes, godlike one,  
Now wages all alone,  
The one sole combatant,<sup>1</sup>  
In place of him who fell,

Against those twain. May victory be his !

*Ægisth.* [*groaning within*] Ah ! ah ! ah !

*Chor.* Hark ! hark ! How goes it now ?

How has the work been in the house accomplished ?

Let us hold back while they the deed are doing,

That we may seem as guiltless of these ills :

For surely now the fight has reached its end.

*Enter Servant from the chief door.*

*Serv.* Alas ! alas ! my master perishes !

Alas ! alas ! a third time yet I call.

*Ægisthos* is no more ; but open now

With all your speed, and loosen ye the bolts

That bar the women's gates. A man's full strength

Is needed ; and yet that would be as nought

To help a man that's slain.

[*Rushes to the gate of the women's half of the  
palace.*]

<sup>1</sup> The word (*ephedros*) was applied technically to one who sat by during a conflict between two athletes, prepared to challenge the victor to a fresh encounter.

Ho there ! I say :

I speak to the deaf ; to those that sleep I utter  
In vain my useless cries. And where is she ?  
Where's Clytæmnestra ? What doth she do now ?  
Her neck upon the razor's edge doth seem  
To fall, down-stricken by a vengeance just.

879

*Enter CLYTÆMNESTRA from the side door.*

*Clytæm.* What means all this ? What cry is this  
thou mak'st ?

*Serv.* I say the dead are killing one who lives.

*Clytæm.* Ah, me ! I see the drift of thy dark speech ;  
By guile we perish, as of old we slew :  
Let some one hand at once axe strong to slay ;  
Let's see if we are conquered or can conquer,  
For in this ill to that point am I come.

*Enter ORESTES from the other door.*

*Orest.* 'Tis thee I seek : he there has had enough.

*Clytæm.* Ah me ! my loved Ægisthos ! Art thou  
dead ?

*Orest.* Lov'st thou the man ? Then in the self-same  
tomb

880

Shalt thou now lie, nor in his death desert him.

*Clytæm.* [*baring her bosom*] Hold, boy ! Respect this  
breast of mine, my son,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So, in Homer, (*Il.* xxii. 79,) Hecuba, when the entreaties of Priam had been in vain, makes this the last appeal—

“ Then to the front his mother rushed, in tears,  
Her bosom bare, with either hand her breast  
Sustaining, and with tears addressed him thus,  
‘ Hector, my son, thy mother's breast revere.’ ”

Whence thou full oft, asleep, with toothless gums,  
Hast sucked the milk that sweetly fed thy life.

*Orest.* What shall I do, my Pylades? Shall I  
Through this respect forbear to slay my mother?

*Pyl.*<sup>1</sup> Where, then, are Loxias' other oracles,  
The Pythian counsels, and the fast-sworn vows?  
Have all men hostile rather than the Gods.

*Orest.* My judgment goes with thine; thou speakest  
well:

[*To CLYTÆMNESTRA.*] Follow: I mean to slay thee  
where he lies, 890

For while he lived thou held'st him far above  
My father. Sleep thou with him in thy death,  
Since thou lov'st him, and whom thou should'st love  
hatest.

*Clytæm.* I reared thee, and would fain grow old with  
thee.

*Orest.* What! Thou live with me, who did'st slay  
my father?

*Clytæm.* Fate, O my son, must share the blame of  
that. ✓

*Orest.* This fatal doom, then, it is Fate that sends.

*Clytæm.* Dost thou not fear a parent's curse, my son?

*Orest.* Thou, though my mother, did'st to ill chance  
cast me.

<sup>1</sup> The reader will note this as the only speech put into the lips of Pylades, though he is present as accompanying Orestes throughout great part of the drama.

*Clytæm.* No outcast thou, so sent to house allied. 900

*Orest.* I was sold doubly, though of free sire born.

*Clytæm.* Where is the price, then, that I got for thee?

*Orest.* I shrink for shame from pressing that charge home.

*Clytæm.* Nay, tell thy father's wantonness as well.

*Orest.* Blame not the man that toils when thou'rt at ease.

*Clytæm.* 'Tis hard, my son, for wives to miss their husband.

*Orest.* The husband's toil keeps her that sits at home.

*Clytæm.* Thou seem'st, my son, about to slay thy mother.

*Orest.* It is not I that slay thee, but thyself.

*Clytæm.* Take heed, beware a mother's vengeful hounds. 910

*Orest.* How, slighting this, shall I escape my father's?

*Clytæm.* I seem in life to wail as to a tomb.<sup>1</sup>

*Orest.* My father's fate ordains this doom for thee.

*Clytæm.* Ah me! the snake is here I bare and nursed.

*Orest.* An o'er-true prophet was that dread dream-born;

<sup>1</sup> The phrase "wail as to a tomb" seems to have been a bye-word for fruitless entreaty and lamentation.

Thou slewest one thou never should'st have slain,  
Now suffer what should never have been thine.

[*Exit ORESTES, leading CLYTÆMNESTRA into the  
palace, and followed by PYLADES.*

*Chor.* E'en of these two I wail the twin mischance ;  
But since long line of murder culminates  
In poor Orestes, this we still accept,  
That he, our one light, fall not utterly.

STROPH. I.

Late came due vengeance on the sons of Priam,  
Just forfeit of sore woe ;—  
Late came there too to Agamemnon's house,  
Twin lions, two-fold Death.<sup>1</sup>  
The exile who obeyed the Pythian hest  
Hath gained his full desire,  
Sped on his way by counsel from the Gods.

STROPH. II.

Shout ye, loud shout for the escape from ills  
Our master's house has seen,  
And from the wasting of his ancient wealth  
By that defiled pair,  
Ill fate intolerable.

ANTISTROPH. I.

And so on him who loves the war of guile

<sup>1</sup> The words must be left in their obscurity. Commentators have conjectured Orestes and Pylades, or the deaths of Agamemnon and Iphigenia, or those of Ægisthos and Clytæmnestra, as the "two lions" spoken of. The first seems most in harmony with the context.

Came Vengeance subtle-souled ;  
 And in the strife of hands the child of Zeus  
     In very deed gave help,  
 (We mortals call her Justice, hitting well  
     The meekest name for her,)  
 Breathing destroying wrath against her foes.

## STROPH. III.

She, she it is whom Loxias summons now,  
 Who dwelleth in Parnassia's cavern vast,  
     \*Invoking her who still  
     \*Is guileful guilelessly,  
 \*Working great ill, though tarrying long in it :  
 The will of Gods is strangely overruled ;  
     It may not help the vile ;<sup>1</sup>  
 \*Tis meet to adore the Power that rules in Heaven :  
     Now may we see the light.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

\*Now is the bit that curbed the slaves ta'en off :<sup>2</sup>  
     Arise, arise, O house :  
 Too long, too long, all prostrate on the ground  
     Ye have been used to lie.

## ANTISTROPH. III.

Quickly all-working Time will bring a change

<sup>1</sup> The Eternal Justice which orders all things is mightier than any arbitrary will, such as men attribute to the Gods. That Will, even if we dare to think of it as changeable or evil, is held in restraint. It cannot, even if it will, protect the evil-doers.

<sup>2</sup> The Chorus feel that they have been too long silent ; now, at last, they can speak. As slaves dreading punishment they had been gagged before ; now the gag is removed.

Across the threshold of the palace old,  
When from the altar-hearth  
It shall drive all the guilt,  
With cleansing rites that chase away our woes ;  
And Fortune's throws shall fall with gladsome cast,

\*Once more benign to see,<sup>1</sup>

For new-come strangers settled in the house :  
Now may we see the light.

*Enter ORESTES, PYLADES, and followers from the palace.*

*His attendants bear the robe in which AGAMEMNON  
had been murdered.*

*Orest.* See ye this country's tyrant rulers twain, 230  
My father's murderers, wasters of his house ;  
Stately were they, seen sitting on their thrones,  
Friends too e'en now, to argue from their fate,  
And oaths are kept to every pledge they gave.  
Firmly they swore that they would slay my father,  
And die together. Well they keep their oaths :  
And ye who hear these ills, behold again  
Their foul device, as bonds for my poor father,  
Handcuffs, and fetters both his feet to bind.  
Come, stretch it out, and standing all around, 270  
Show ye the snare that wrapt him o'er, that He  
May see, our Father,—not of mine I speak,  
But the great Sun that looks on all we do,—  
My mother's deeds, defiled and impure,  
That He may be a witness in my cause,

<sup>1</sup> Or "Once more for those who wait."



That I did justly bring this doom to pass  
 Against my mother. . . . Of Ægisthos' fate  
 No word I speak. He bears the penalty,  
 As runs the law, of an adulterer's guilt ;  
 But she who planned this crime against a man  
 By whom she knew the weight of children borne  
 Beneath her girdle, once a burden loved,  
 But now, as this shews clear, a grievous ill, 989  
 What seems she to you ? Had she viper been,  
 Or fell myræna,<sup>1</sup> she with touch alone,  
 \*Rather than bite, had made a festering sore  
 With that bold daring of unrighteous mood.  
 What shall I call it, using mildest speech ?  
 A wild beast's trap ?—a pall that wraps a bier,  
 And hides a dead man's feet ?—A net, I trow,  
 A snare, a robe entangling, one might call it.  
 Such might be owned by one to plunder trained,  
 Practised in duping travellers, and the life  
 That robs men of their money ; with this trick 190  
 Destroying many, many deeds of ill  
 His fevered brain might hatch. May such as she  
 Ne'er share my dwelling ! May the hand of God  
 Far rather smite me that I childless die !

*Chor.* [*looking on AGAMEMNON's robe,*] Ah me ! ah  
 me ! these deeds most miserable !

<sup>1</sup> It is not clear with what form of animal life the *myræna* is to be identified. The idea implied is that of some sea monster whose touch was poisonous, but this does not hold good of the "lamprey."

By hateful murder thou wast done to death.

Woe, woe is me !

And evil buds and blooms for him that's left.

*Orest.* Was the deed hers or no? Lo! this same  
robe

Bears witness how she dyed Ægisthos' sword,  
And the blood-stain helps Time's destroying work, 1000  
Marring full many a tint of pattern fair :

\*Now cite I it, and as eye-witness wail ;  
And calling on this robe that slew my father,  
Moan for all done and suffered, wail my race,  
Stained with the guilt of conquest none need envy.

*Chor.* No mortal man shall live a life unharmed,  
\*Stout-hearted and rejoicing evermore.

Woe, woe is me !

One trouble vexes now, another comes.

*Orest. (wildly, as one distraught,) That ye may know*

. . . . for I know not its issue . . . . 1010

Like chariot-driver with my steeds I'm dragged  
Out of my course ; for every mood uncurbed  
Bears me its victim headlong. At my heart  
Stands terror ready or to sing or dance  
In burst of passion. While my reason stays,  
I tell my friends here that I slew my mother,  
Not without right, my father's murderess,  
Accursed and hated of the Gods. And I  
As chiefest spell that made me dare this deed  
Count Loxias, Pythian prophet, warning me

That doing this I should be free from blame, 1087  
 But slighting . . . . I pass o'er the penalty <sup>1</sup> . . . .  
 For none, aim as he will, such woes will hit.  
 And now ye see me, in what guise equipped,  
     *[Putting on the suppliant's wreaths, and taking*  
     *an olive branch in his hand.*

With this my bough and chaplet I will gain  
 Earth's central shrine, the home where Loxias dwells,  
 And the bright fire that is as deathless known,<sup>2</sup>  
 Seeking to 'scape this guilt of kindred blood;  
 And on no other hearth, so Loxias bade,  
 May I seek shelter. And I charge you all,  
 Ye Argives, bear ye witness in due time 1090  
 How these dark deeds of wretched ill were wrought :  
 But I, a wanderer, exiled from my land,  
 Shall live, and leaving these my prayers in death, . . .

*Chor.* Nay, thou hast prospered: burden not thy lips  
 With evil speech, nor speak ill-boding words,  
 When thou hast freed the Argive commonwealth,  
 By good chance lopping those two serpents' heads.

*[The Erinnyes are seen in the back-ground, in black robes, and with snakes in their hair.*

*Orest.* Ah ! ah ! ye handmaids : see, like Gorgons these,

<sup>1</sup> Comp. vv. 270-288.

<sup>2</sup> Delphi was to the Greek (as Jerusalem was to mediæval Christendom) the centre at once of his religious life and of the material earth. Its rock was the *omphalos* of the world. Consecrated widows watched over the sacred and perpetual fire. Once only up to the time of Æschylos, when the Temple itself was desecrated by the Persians, had it ceased to burn.

Dark-robed, and all their tresses hang entwined  
With many serpents. I can stay no longer.

*Chor.* What phantoms vex thee, best beloved of  
sons 1040

By thy dear sire? Hold, fear not, victory's thine. ✓

*Orest.* These are no phantom terrors that I see :  
Full clear they are my mother's vengeful hounds.

*Chor.* The blood fresh-shed is yet upon thy hands ;  
And thence it is these troubles haunt thy soul.

*Orest.* O King Apollo! See, they swarm, they  
swarm,

And from their eyes is dropping loathsome blood.

*Chor.* One way of cleansing is there ; Loxias' form  
Clasp thou, and he will free thee from these ills.

*Orest.* These forms ye see not, but I see them  
there : 1050

They drive me on, and I can bear no more.

*Chor.* Well, may'st thou prosper ; may our gracious  
God

Watch o'er and guard thee with a chance well timed !

Here, then, upon this palace of our kings

A third storm blows again ;

The wind that haunts the race has run its course,

First came the wretched meal of children's flesh ;

Next what befell our king :

Slain in the bath was he who ruled our host,

Of all the Achæans lord ;

And now a third has come, we know not whence,<sup>1</sup>

To save . . . or shall I say,

To work a doom of death ?

Where will it end ? Where will it cease at last,

The strength of woe that now

Is lulled awhile to sleep ?

<sup>1</sup> Once again we have the thought of the third cup offered as a libation to Zeus as saviour and deliverer. The Chorus asks whether this third deed of blood will be true to that idea and work out deliverance.

# EUMENIDES.



### ARGUMENT.

*The Erinnyes who appeared to Orestes after the murder of Clytemnestra made his life miserable, and drove him without rest from land to land. And he, seeking to escape them, had recourse to the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, believing that he who had sent him to do the work of vengeance would also help to free him from this wretchedness. But the Erinnyes followed him there also, and took their places even within the holy shrine of the Oracle, and while Orestes knelt on the central hearth as a suppliant, they sat upon the seats there, and for very weariness fell asleep.*



**Dramatis Personæ.**

**PYTHIAN PRIESTESS.**

**APOLLO.**

**ATHENA.**

*Ghost of Clytæmnestra.*

**ORESTES.**

**HERMES.**

*Chorus of the Erinnyes.*

*Athenian Citizens, Women, and Girls.*

## EUMENIDES.

---

SCENE.—*The Outer Court of the Oracle at Delphi.  
Inner shrine in the back-ground, with doors leading  
into it.*

*Enter the PYTHIAN PRIESTESS.*

*Pyth.* First, with this prayer, of all the Gods I  
honour

The primal seeress Earth, and Themis next,<sup>1</sup>  
Who in due order filled her mother's place,  
(So runs the tale) and in the third lot named,  
With her goodwill and doing wrong to none,  
Another of the Titans' offspring sat,  
Earth's daughter Phœbe, and as birthday gift  
She gives it up to Phœbos,<sup>2</sup> and he takes

<sup>1</sup> The succession is, in part, accordant with that in the *Theogonia* of Hesiod, (vv. 116-136,) but the special characteristic of the Æschylean form of the legend is that each change is a step in a due, rightful succession, as by free gift, not accomplished (as in other narratives of the same transition) by violence and wrong.

<sup>2</sup> Phœbe, in the *Theogonia*, marries Coios, and becomes the mother of Leto, or Latona, and so the grandmother of Apollo. The "birthday gift"

His name from Phœbe. And he, leaving then  
 The pool<sup>1</sup> and rocks of Delos, having steered  
 To the ship-traversed shores that Pallas owns,  
 Came to this land and to Parnassos' seat :  
 And with great reverence they escort him on,  
 Hephæstos' sons, road-makers,<sup>2</sup> turning thus  
 A rough, wild country into civilised ;  
 And when He comes, the people honour him,  
 And Delphos too,<sup>3</sup> chief pilot of this land.  
 And him Zeus sets, his mind with skill inspired,  
 As the fourth seer upon these sacred seats ;  
 And Loxias is his father Zeus's prophet.  
 These Gods in prologue of my prayer I worship ;  
 Pallas Pronaia<sup>4</sup> next with praise is honoured ;  
 The Nymphs adore I too where stands the rock

was commonly presented on the eighth day after birth, when the child was named. The oracle is spoken of as such a gift to Apollo, as bearing the name of Phœbos.

<sup>1</sup> The sacred circular pool of Delos is the crater of an extinct volcano. There Apollo was born, and thence he passed through Attica to Parnassos, to take possession of the Oracle, according to one form of the myth depriving Themis of it and slaying the dragon Python that kept guard over it.

<sup>2</sup> The people of Attica are thus named, either as being mythically descended from Erichthonios the son of Hephæstos, or as artificers, who own him as their father. The words refer to the supposed origin of the Sacred Road from Athens to Delphi passing through Boeotia and Phokis. When the Athenians sent envoys to consult the oracle they were preceded by men bearing axes, in remembrance of the original pioneering work which had been done for Apollo. The first work of active civilisation was thus connected with the worship of the giver of Light and Wisdom.

<sup>3</sup> Delphos, the hero *Eponymos* (name-giving) of Delphi, was honoured as the son of Poseidon. Hence the Priestess invokes the latter as one of the guardian deities of the shrine.

<sup>4</sup> Pronaia, as having her shrine or statue in front of the temple of Apollo.

Korykian,<sup>1</sup> hollow, loved of birds and haunt  
 Of Gods. [And Bromios<sup>2</sup> also claims this place,  
 Nor can I now forget it, since the time  
 When he, a God, with help of Bacchantes warred,  
 And planned a death for Pentheus, like a hare's.<sup>3</sup>]  
 Invoking Pleistos<sup>4</sup>, founts, Poseidon's might,  
 And Zeus most High, supreme Accomplisher,  
 I in due order sit upon this seat  
 As seeress, and I pray them that they grant  
 To find than all my former divinations  
 One better still. If Hellas pilgrims sends,  
 Let them approach by lot, as is our law ;  
 For as the God guides I give oracles.<sup>5</sup>

*[She passes through the door to the adytum, and  
 after a pause returns trembling and crouch-  
 ing with fear, supporting herself with her*

<sup>1</sup> The Korykian rock in Parnassos, as in Soph., *Antig.* v. 1128 ; known also as the "Nymphs' cavern."

<sup>2</sup> Bromios, a name of Dionysos, embodying the special attributes of loud, half-frenzied revelry.

<sup>3</sup> In the legend which Euripides follows, Kitharon, not Parnassos, is the scene of the death of Pentheus. He, it was said, opposed the wild or frantic worship of the Pelasgic Bacchos, concealed himself that he might behold the mysteries of the Maenads, and was torn in pieces by his mother and two others, on whose eyes the God had cast such glamour that they took him for a wild beast. English readers may be referred to Dean Milman's translation of the *Bacchanals* of Euripides.

<sup>4</sup> Pleistos, topographically, a river flowing through the vale of Delphi, mythically the father of the nymphs of Korykos.

<sup>5</sup> At one time the Oracle had been open to questioners once in the year only, afterwards once a month. The pilgrims, after they had made their offerings, cast lots, and the doors were opened to him to whom the lot had fallen. Plutarch, *Qu. Græc.*, p. 292.

*hands against the walls and columns. The door remains open, and Orestes and the Erinyes are seen in the inner sanctuary.*

Dread things to tell, and dread for eyes to see,  
 Have sent me back again from Loxias' shrine,  
 \*So that strength fails, nor can I nimbly move,  
 But run with help of hands not speed of foot ;  
 A woman old and terrified is nought,  
 A very child. Lo ! Into yon recess  
 With garlands hung I go, and there I see  
 Upon the central stone<sup>1</sup> a God-loathed man, 40  
 Sitting as suppliant, and with hands that dripped  
 Blood-drops, and holding sword but newly drawn,  
 And branch of olive from the topmost growth,  
 With amplest tufts of white wool meetly wreathed ;  
 For this I will say clearly.<sup>2</sup> And a troop  
 Of women strange to look\*at sleepeth there,  
 Before this wanderer, seated on their stools ;  
 Not women they, but Gorgons<sup>3</sup> I must call them ;

<sup>1</sup> The altar of the adytum, on the very centre, as men deemed, of the whole earth. Zeus, it was said, had sent forth two eagles at the same moment ; one from the East and the other from the West, and here it was that they had met. The stone was of white marble, and the two eagles were sculptured on it. Strabo, ix. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The priestess dwells upon the outward tokens, which shewed that the suppliant came as one whose need was specially urgent. On the ritual of supplication generally comp. *Suppl.* vv. 22, 348, 641, *Soph. Œd. King*, v. 3. *Œd. Col.* vv. 469-489.

<sup>3</sup> Æschylos apparently follows the *Theogonia* of Hesiod (l. 278) who describes the Gorgons as three in number, daughters of Phorkys and Keto, and bearing the names of Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa. The last enters into the Perseus cycle of myths, as one of the monsters whom he conquered, with

Nor yet can I to Gorgon forms compare them :  
 I have seen painted shapes that bear away 50  
 The feast of Phineus.<sup>1</sup> Wingless, though, are these,  
 And swarth, and every way abominable.  
 \*They snort with breath that none may dare approach,  
 And from their eyes a loathsome humour pours,  
 And such their garb as neither to the shrine  
 Of Gods is meet to bring, nor mortal roof.  
 Ne'er have I seen a race that owns this tribe,  
 Nor is there land that boasts it rears this brood,  
 Unhurt and free from sorrow for its pains.  
 Henceforth be it the lot of Loxias, 60  
 Our mighty lord, himself to deal with them :  
 A prophet-healer he, and portent-seer,  
 And for all others cleanser of their homes.

*Enter APOLLO from the inner adytum, attended by*

HERMES.

*Apol. [To ORESTES.]* Nay, I'll not fail thee, but as  
 close at hand

a face once beautiful, but with her hair turned to serpents by the wrath of Athena, and so dreadful to look upon that whoso gazed on her was turned to stone. When Perseus had slain her, Athena placed her head in her ægis, and thus became the terror of all who were foes to herself or her people. A wild legendary account of them meets us in the *Prom. Bound*, v. 812. As works of art, the Gorgon images are traceable to the earliest or Kyclopian period.

<sup>1</sup> Here also we have a reference to a familiar subject of early Greek art, probably to some painting familiar to an Athenian audience. The name of Phineus indicates that the monstrous forms spoken of are those of the Harpies, birds with women's faces, or women with birds' wings, who were sent

Will guard thee to the end, or though far off,  
 Will not prove yielding to thine adversaries ;  
 And now thou see'st these fierce ones captive ta'en,  
 These loathly maidens fallen fast asleep.

Hoary and ancient virgins they, with whom  
 Nor God, nor man, nor beast, holds intercourse. 70

They owe their birth to evils ; for they dwell  
 In evil darkness, yea in Tartaros  
 Beneath the earth, and are the hate and dread  
 Of all mankind, and of Olympian Gods.

Yet fly thou, fly, and be not faint of heart ;  
 For they will chase thee over mainland wide,  
 As thou dost tread the soil by wanderers tracked,  
 And o'er the ocean, and by sea-girt towns ;  
 And fail thou not before the time, as brooding  
 O'er this great toil. But go to Pallas' city,  
 And sit, and clasp her ancient image<sup>1</sup> there ; 80

And there with judges of these things, and words  
 Strong to appease, will we a means devise  
 To free thee from these ills for evermore ;  
 For I urged thee to take thy mother's life.

*Orest.* Thou know'st, O king Apollo, not to wrong ;  
 And since thou know'st, learn also not to slight :  
 Thy strength to act is fully competent.

to vex the blind seer for his cruelty to the children of his first marriage.  
 Comp. Soph. *Antig.* v. 973. In the *Æneid* they appear (III. 225) as dwelling  
 in the Strophades, and harassing Æneas and his companions.

<sup>1</sup> The old image of Pallas, carved in olive-wood, as distinguished from  
 later sculpture.

*Apol.* Remember, let no fear o'ercome thy soul ;  
And [*To HERMES,*] thou, my brother, of one father  
born,

O Hermes, guard him ; true to that thy name,  
Be thou his Guide, true shepherd of this man,  
Who comes to me as suppliant : Zeus himself      99  
\*Reveres this reverence e'en to outcasts due,  
When it to mortals comes with guidance good.<sup>1</sup>

[*Exit ORESTES led by HERMES. APOLLO retires  
within the Adytum. The Ghost of CLYTÆM-  
NESTRA rises from the ground.*

*Clytæm.* What ho ! Sleep on ! What need of sleepers  
now ?

And I am put by you to foul disgrace  
Among the other dead, nor fails reproach  
Among the shades that I a murderess am ;  
And so in shame I wander, and I tell you  
That at their hands I bear worst form of blame.  
And much as I have borne from nearest kin,      109  
Yet not one God is stirred to wrath for me,  
Though done to death by matricidal hands.  
See ye these heart-wounds, whence and how they came ?  
Yea, when it sleeps, the mind is bright with eyes ;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The early code of hospitality bound the host, who as such had once received a guest under the shelter of his roof, not to desert him, even though he might discover afterwards that he had been guilty of great crimes, but to escort him safely to the boundary of his territory. Thus Apollo, as the host with whom Orestes had taken refuge, sends Hermes, the escort God, to guide and defend him on his way to Athens.

<sup>2</sup> The thought that the highest wisdom came to men rather in "visions of



But in the day it is man's lot to lack  
 All true discernment. Many a gift of mine  
 Have ye lapped up, libations pure from wine,<sup>1</sup>  
 And soothing rites that shut out drunken mirth ;  
 And I dread banquets of the night would offer  
 On altar-hearth, at hour no God might share.  
 And lo ! all this is trampled under foot. 120  
 He is escaped, and flees, like fawn, away ;  
 And even from the midst of all your toils  
 Has nimbly slipped, and draws wide mouth at you.  
 Hear ye ; for I have spoken for my life :  
 Give heed, ye dark, earth-dwelling Goddesses.  
 I, Clytæmnestra's phantom, call on you.

*[The Erinnyes snort and snore.*

Snore on, the man is gone, and flees far off :  
 My kindred find protectors ; I find none.

*[Snore and snort as before.*

Too sleep-oppressed art thou, nor pitiest me :  
 Orestes, murderer of his mother, 'scapes. 120

*[Noises repeated.*

Dost snort ? Dost snore ? Wilt thou not rise and  
 speed ?

What have ye ever done but work out ill ?

*[Noises as before.*

the night, when deep sleep falleth on men," than through the waking senses, which we have already met with in *Agam.* v. 173, is traceable to the mysticism of Pythagoras, more distinctly perhaps to that of Epimenides.

<sup>1</sup> Wine, as in *Soph. Œd. Col.* vv. 100, 481, was rigidly excluded from the *cultus* of the Eumenides, and to them only as daughters of Night were mid-night sacrifices offered.

Yea, sleep and toil, supreme conspirators,  
Have withered up the dreaded dragon's strength.

*Chor.* [*starting up suddenly with a yell.*] Seize him,  
seize, seize, yea, seize : look well to it.

*Clytæm.* Thou, phantom-like,<sup>1</sup> dost hunt thy prey, and  
criest,

Like hound that never rests from thoughts of toil.

What dost thou ? (*to one Erinnyes.*) Rise and let not toil  
o'ercome thee,

Nor, lulled to sleep, lose all thy sense of loss.

Let thy soul (*to another*) feel the pain of just re-  
proach : 130

The wise of heart find that their goad and spur.

And thou (*to a third*), breathe on him with thy blood-  
flecked breath,

And with thy vapour, thy maw's fire, consume him ;

Chase him, and wither with a fresh pursuit.

*Leader of the Chor.* Wake, wake, I say ; wake her, as  
I wake thee.

Dost slumber ? Rise, I say, and shake off sleep.

Let's see if this our prelude be in vain.

STROPH. I.

Pah ! Pah ! Oh me ! We suffered, O my friends. . . .

Yea, many mine own sufferings undeserved. . . .

<sup>1</sup> The common rendering "in a dream" gives a sufficient meaning, and is, of course, tenable enough. But there is a force in the repetition of the same word, as in v. 116, which is thus lost, and which I have endeavoured to preserve. The Erinnyes, thus impotent in their rage, are as much mere dream-like spectres as is the ghost of Clytæmnestra.

We suffered a great sorrow, full of woe,

140

An evil hard to bear.

Out of the nets he's slipped, our prey is gone :

O'ercome by sleep I have my quarry lost.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Ah, son of Zeus, a very robber thou,

Though young, thou did'st old Goddesses ride down,<sup>1</sup>

Honouring thy suppliant, godless though he be,

One whom his parents loathe :

Thou, though a God, a matricide hast rescued :

Of which of these acts can one speak as just ?

STROPH. II.

Yea, and this shame that came to me from dreams

150

Smote me, as charioteer

Smites with a goad he in the middle grasps,

Beneath my breast, my heart ;

'Tis ours to feel the keen, the o'er keen smart,

As by the public scourger fiercely lashed.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Such are the doings of these younger Gods,

Beyond all bounds of right

Stretching their power. . . . A clot of blood be-  
smeared

Upon the base, the head, . . .

Earth's central shrine itself we now may see

160

Take to itself pollution terrible.

<sup>1</sup> Here, as throughout Æschylos, the Olympian divinities are thought of as new comers, thrusting from their thrones the older Chthonian and Titanic dynasty, Gods of the conquering Hellenes superseding those of the Pelasgi.

STROPH. III.

And thou, a seer, with guilt that stains thy hearth  
Hast fouled thy shrine, self-prompted, self-impelled,  
Against the laws of Gods a mortal honouring,  
And bringing low the Fates  
Born in the hoary past.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Me he may vex, but shall not rescue him ;  
Though 'neath the earth he flee, he is not freed ;  
For he, blood-stained, shall find upon his head  
Another after me,  
Destroyer foul and dread.  
[*APOLLO advances from the Adytum and confronts them.*

*Apol.* Out, out, I bid you, quickly from this temple ;  
Go forth, and leave this shrine oracular, 170  
Lest with a serpent winged and glistening bright,  
Forth darted from my bow-string golden-wrought,  
Thou in sore pain bring up dark foam, and vomit  
The clots of blood thou suck'dst from human veins.  
This is no house where ye may meetly come,  
But there where heads upon the scaffold lie,<sup>1</sup>  
And eyes are gouged, and throats of men are cut,  
\*And mutilation mars the bloom of youth,

<sup>1</sup> The accumulation of horrid forms of cruelty had, probably, a special significance for the Athenians. These punishments belonged to their enemies, the Persians, not to the Hellenic race, and the poet's purpose was to rekindle patriotic feeling by dwelling on their barbarity, as in *Agam.* v. 894, he points in like manner to their haughtiness and luxury.

Where men are maimed and stoned to death, and  
groan

With bitter wailing, on the stake impaled ; 180  
Hear ye what feast ye love, and so become  
Loathed of the Gods ? Yes, all your figure's fashion  
Points clearly to it. Such as ye should dwell  
In cave of lion battening upon blood,  
Nor tarry in these sacred precincts here,  
Working defilement. Go, and roam afield  
Without a shepherd, for to flock like this  
Not one of all the Gods is friendly found.

*Chor.* O king Apollo, hear us in our turn :  
No mere accomplice art thou of these things, 190  
But guilty art in full as principal.

*Apol.* How then ? Prolong thy speech to tell me  
this.

*Chor.* Thou bad'st this stranger be a matricide.

*Apol.* I bade him to avenge his sire. Why not ?

*Chor.* Then thou did'st welcome here the blood just  
shed.

*Apol.* I bade him seek this shrine as suppliant.

*Chor.* Yet us who were his escort thou revilest.

*Apol.* It is not meet that ye come nigh this house.

*Chor.* Yet is this self-same task appointed us.

*Apol.* What function's this ? Take goodly grounds  
for boasting. 200

*Chor.* We drive from home the murderers of their  
mothers.

*Apol.* What? Those who kill a wife that slays her spouse?

*Chor.* That deed brings not the guilt of blood of kin.<sup>1</sup>

*Apol.* \* Truly thou mak'st dishonoured, and as nought  
The marriage-vows of Zeus and Hera great ;  
And by this reasoning Kypris too is shamed,  
From whom men gain the ties of closest love.  
For still to man and woman marriage bed,  
Assigned by Fate and guided by the Right,  
Is more than any oath. If thou then deal  
So gently, when the one the other slays, 210  
And dost not even look on them with wrath,  
I say thou dost not justly chase Orestes ;  
For thou, in this one case, I know, dost rage ;  
I' the other, clearly tak'st it easily :  
The Goddess Pallas shall our quarrel judge.

*Chor.* That man I ne'er will leave for evermore.

*Apol.* Chase him then, chase, and gain yet more of  
toil.

*Chor.* Curtail not thou my functions by thy speech.

*Apol.* Ne'er by my choice would I thy functions  
own.

<sup>1</sup> The argument of the Erinyes is, to some extent, like that of the Antigone of Sophocles, (*Antig.* 909-913,) and the wife of Intaphernes, (*Herod.* III. 119.) The tie which binds the husband to the wife is less sacred than that between the mother and the son. This therefore brings on the slayer the guilt of blood of kin, while murder in the other case is reduced to simple homicide. Orestes therefore was not justified in perpetrating the greater crime as a retribution for the less. ✓

*Chor.* True : great thy name among the thrones of  
Zeus :

229

But I, his mother's blood constraining me,  
Will this man chase and track him like a hound.

*Apol.* And I will help him and my suppliant free ;  
For dreadful among Gods and mortals too  
The suppliant's curse, should I abandon him.

[*Exeunt.*

*Scene changes to Athens, in front of the Temple of Athena  
Polias, on the Acropolis.<sup>1</sup>*

*Enter ORESTES.*

*Orest.* [*clasping the statue of the Goddess.*] O Queen  
Athena, I at Loxias' hest  
Am come : do thou receive me graciously,  
Sin-stained though I have been : no guilt of blood  
Is on my soul, nor is my hand unclean,  
But now with stain toned down and worn away,  
In other homes and journeyings among men,<sup>2</sup>

230

<sup>1</sup> The ideal interval of time between the two parts of the drama is left undefined, but it would seem from vv. 274-6 to have been long enough to have allowed of many wanderings to sacred places. Orestes does not go straight from Delphi to Athens. He appears now, not as before dripping and besmeared with blood, but with hands and garments purified.

<sup>2</sup> The story of Adrastus and Cræsus in Herod. I. 35, illustrates the gradual purification of which Orestes speaks. The penitent who has the stain of blood-guiltiness upon him comes to the king, and the king, as his host, performs the lustral rites for him. Here Orestes urges that he has been received at many homes, and gone through many such lustrations. He has been cleansed from the pollution of sin : what he now seeks is a forensic justification.

O'er land and water travelling alike,  
 Keeping great Loxias' charge oracular,  
 I come, O Goddess, to thy shrine and statue :  
 Here will I stay and wait the trial's issue.

*Enter the Erinyes in pursuit.*

*Chor.* Lo ! here are clearest traces of the man :  
 Follow thou up that dumb informer's<sup>1</sup> hints ;  
 For as the hound pursues a wounded fawn,  
 So by red blood and oozing gore track we.  
 My lungs are panting with full many a toil,  
 Wearing man's strength down. Every spot of earth <sup>240</sup>  
 Have I now searched, and o'er the sea in flight  
 Wingless I came pursuing, swift as ship ;  
 And now full sure he's crouching somewhere here :  
 The smell of human blood wafts joy to me.  
 See, see again, look round ye every way,  
 Lest he, the murderer, slip away unscathed.  
 He, it is true, in full security,  
 Claspings the statue of the deathless goddess,  
 Would fain now take his trial at our hands. <sup>250</sup>  
 This may not be ; a mother's blood out-poured  
 (Pah ! pah !) can never be raised up again,  
 The life-blood shed is poured out and gone,  
 But thou must give to us to suck the blood  
 Red from thy living members ; yea, from thee,  
 May I gain meal of drink undrinkable !

<sup>1</sup> Sc. the scent of blood, which though no longer visible to the eyes of men, still lingers round him and is perceptible to his pursuers.



And, having dried thee up, I'll drag thee down  
Alive to bear the doom of matricide.

There thou shalt see if any other man

Has sinned in not revering God or guest,  
Or parents dear, that each receiveth there  
The recompense of sin that Justice claims.

260

For Hades is a mighty arbiter  
Of those that dwell below, and with a mind  
That writes true record all man's deeds surveys.

*Orest.* I, taught by troubles, know full many a form  
Of cleansing rites,—to speak, when that is meet,  
And when 'tis not, keep silence, and in this  
I by wise teacher was enjoined to speak ;  
For the blood fails and fades from off my hands ;  
The guilt of matricide is washed away.  
For when 'twas fresh, it then was all dispelled,  
At Phœbos' shrine, by spells of slaughtered swine.  
Long would the story be, if told complete,  
Of all I joined in harmless intercourse.  
Time waxing old, too, cleanses all alike :  
And now with pure lips, I in words devout,  
Call Athenæa, whom this land owns queen,  
To come and help me : So without a war  
Shall she gain me, my land, my Argive people,  
Full faithful friends, allies for evermore ;<sup>1</sup>

270

280

<sup>1</sup> Here, too, we trace the political bearing of the play. In the year when it was produced (B.C. 458) an alliance with Argos was the favourite measure of the more conservative party at Athens.

But whether in the climes of Libyan land,  
Hard by her birth-stream's foam, Tritonian named,<sup>1</sup>  
She stands upright, or sits with feet enwapt,  
Helping her friends, or o'er Phlegræan plains,  
Like a bold chieftain, she keeps watchful guard,<sup>2</sup>  
Oh, may she come ! (Far off a God can hear,)  
And work for me deliverance from these ills !

*Chor.* Nay, nor Apollo, nor Athena's might  
Can save thee from the doom of perishing, 290  
Outcast, not knowing where to look for joy,  
The bloodless food of demons, a mere shade.  
Wilt thou not answer ? Scornest thou my words ?  
A victim reared and consecrate to me,  
Alive thou 'lt feed me, not at altar slain ;  
And thou shalt hear our hymn as spell to bind thee.

*The Erinnyes, as they sing the ode that follows, move  
round and round in solemn and weird measure.*

Come, then, let us form our chorus ;  
Since 'tis now our will to utter

<sup>1</sup> The names Triton and Tritonis, wherever found in classical geography, (Libya, Crete, Thessaly, Bœotia,) are always connected with the legend that Athena was born there. Probably both name and legend were carried from Greece to Libya, and then amalgamated with the indigenous local worship of a warlike goddess. Hesiod (iv. 180, 188) connects the Libyan lake with the legend of Jason and the Argonauts.

<sup>2</sup> In the war with the giants fought in the Phlegræan plains (the volcanic district of Campania) Athena had helped her father Zeus by her wise counsel, and was honoured there as keeping in check the destructive Titanic forces which had been so subdued, burying Enkelados, *e.g.*, in Sicily. The "friends" are her Libyan worshippers.

Melody of song most hateful,  
 Telling how our band assigneth  
 All the lots that fall to mortals ;  
 And we boast that we are righteous :  
 Not on one who pure hands lifteth  
 Falleth from us any anger,  
 But his life he passeth scatheless ;  
 But to him who sins like this man  
 And his blood-stained hands concealeth,  
 Witnesses for those who perish,  
 Coming to exact blood-forfeit,  
 We appear to work completeness.

200

210

## STROPH. I.

O mother who did'st bear me, mother Night,  
 A terror of the living and the dead,  
     Hear me, oh, hear !  
 The son of Leto puts me to disgrace  
     And robs me of my spoil,  
 This crouching victim for a mother's blood :  
     And over him as slain,  
 We raise this chant of madness, frenzy-working,<sup>1</sup>  
     The hymn the Erinnyes love,  
 A spell upon the soul, a lyreless strain  
     That withers up men's strength.

<sup>1</sup> The Choral ode here is brought in as an incantation. This weapon is to succeed where others have failed, and this too, the frenzy which seizes the soul in the remembrance of its past transgression, is soothed and banished by Athena.

## ANTISTROPH. I.

This lot the all-pervading Destiny 339  
Hath spun to hold its ground for evermore,  
That we should still attend  
On him on whom there rests the guilt of blood  
Of kin shed causelessly,  
Till earth lie o'er him ; nor shall death set free.  
And over him as slain,  
We raise this chant of madness, frenzy-working,  
The hymn the Erinnyes love,  
A spell upon the soul, a lyreless strain  
That withers up men's strength.

## STROPH. II.

Such lot was then assigned us at our birth :  
From us the Undying Ones must hold aloof : 339  
Nor is there one who shares  
The banquet-meal with us ;  
In garments white I have nor part nor lot ; <sup>1</sup>  
My choice was made for overthrow of homes ;  
Where home-bred slaughter works a loved one's death :  
Ha ! hunting after him,  
Strong though he be, 'tis ours  
\*To wear the newness of the fresh blood down.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

\* Since 'tis our work another's task to take, <sup>2</sup> 340

<sup>1</sup> White, as the special colour of festal joy, was not used in the worship of the Erinnyes.

<sup>2</sup> The thought which underlies the obscurity of a corrupt passage seems to

\* The Gods indeed may bar the force of prayers  
     Men offer unto me,  
     But cannot clash in strife ;  
 For Zeus doth cast us from his fellowship,  
 Blood-dropping, worthy of his utmost hate. . . .  
 For leaping down as from the topmost height,  
     I on my victim bring  
     The crushing force of feet,  
 Limbs that o'erthrow e'en those that swiftly run,  
     An Atè hard to bear.

250

## STROPH. III.

And fame of men, though very lofty now  
     Beneath the clear, bright sky,  
 Below the earth grows dim and fades away  
 Before the attack of us, the black-robed ones,  
     And these our dancings wild,  
     Which all men loathe and hate.

## ANTISTROPH. III.

Falling in frenzied guilt, he knows it not ;  
     So thick the blinding cloud  
 \* That o'er him floats ; and Rumour widely spread

be that, as they relieve the Gods from the task of being avengers of blood, all that the Gods on their side can legitimately do against them is to render powerless the prayers for vengeance offered by the kindred of the slain. Their very isolation, as Chthonian deities, from the Gods of Olympus should protect them from open conflict. But an alternative rendering of the second line gives, perhaps, a better meaning—

“And by the prayers men offer unto me  
     Work freedom for the Gods.”

i.e., by being the appointed receivers of such prayers for vengeance, they leave the Gods free for a higher and serener life.

With many a sigh reports the dreary doom,  
A mist that o'er the house  
In gathering darkness broods.

STROPH. IV.

Fixed is the law, no lack of means find we :

Our purpose never fails ;

36

The dreaded Ones, the registrars of crime,

Whom mortals fail to soothe,

Fulfilling tasks dishonoured, unrevered,

Apart from all the Gods,

\* In foul and sunless gloom.<sup>1</sup>

Driving o'er rough steep road both those that see,

And those whose eyes are closed.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

What mortal man then doth not bow in awe

And fear before all this,

Hearing from me the destined ordinance

Assigned me by the Gods ?

37

This task of mine is one of ancient days ;

Nor meet I here with scorn,

Though 'neath the earth I dwell,

And live there in the darkness thick and dense,

Where never sunbeam falls.

[*Enter ATHENA, appearing in her chariot, and  
then alights.*

*Athena.* I heard far off the cry of thine entreaty

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, "With torch of sunless gloom."

E'en from Scamandros,<sup>1</sup> claiming there mine own,  
 The land which all Achaia's foremost leaders,  
 As portion chief from out the spoils of war,  
 Gave to me, trees and all, for evermore,  
 A special gift for Theseus' progeny.

326

Thence came I plying foot that never tires,  
 Flapping my ægis-folds, no need of wings,  
 My chariot drawn by young and vigorous colts ;  
 And seeing this new presence in the land,  
 I have no fear, though wonder fills mine eyes ;  
 Who, pray, are ye ? To all of you I speak,  
 And to this stranger at my statue suppliant.  
 And as for you, like none of Nature's births,  
 Nor seen by Gods among the Goddess-forms,  
 Nor yet in likeness of a mortal shape . . . .  
 But to speak ill of neighbours blameless found  
 Is far from just, and Right holds back from it.

330

*Chor.* Daughter of Zeus, thou shalt learn all in  
 brief ;

Children are we of everlasting Night ;

[At home, beneath the earth, they call us Curses.]

*Athena.* Your race I know, and whence ye take  
 your name.

<sup>1</sup> The words contain an allusion to the dispute between Athens and Mitylene in the time of Peisistratos, as to the possession of Sigeion. Athena asserts that it had been given to her by the whole body of Achæans at the time when they had taken Troia. Comp. Herod. v. 94, 95. It probably entered into the political purposes of the play to excite the Athenians to a war in this direction, so as to draw them off from the constitutional changes proposed by Pericles and Ephialtes.

*Chor.* Thou shalt soon know then what mine office is.

*Athena.* Then could I know, if ye clear speech would speak.

*Chor.* We from their home drive forth all homicides.

*Athena.* Where doth the slayer find the goal of flight?<sup>40</sup>

*Chor.* Where to find joy in nought is still his wont.

*Athena.* And whirrest thou such flight on this man here?

*Chor.* Yea, for he thought it meet to slay his mother.

*Athena.* Was there no other power whose wrath he feared?

*Chor.* What motive, then, should prick to matricide?

*Athena.* Two sides are here, and I but half have heard.

*Chor.* But he nor tenders nor accepts an oath.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here, and throughout the trial, we have to bear in mind the technicalities of Athenian judicial procedure. The prosecutor, in the first instance, tendered to the accused an oath that he was not guilty. This he might accept or refuse. In the latter case, the course of the trial was at least stopped, and judgment might be recorded against him. If he could bring himself to accept it, he was acquitted of the special charge of which he was accused, but was liable to a prosecution afterwards for that perjury. If, on the other hand, he tendered an oath affirming his guilt to the prosecutor, he placed himself in his hands. Orestes, not being able to deny the fact, will not declare on oath that he is "not guilty," but neither will he place himself in the power of his accusers. The peculiarities of this use of oaths were :



*Athena.* Thou lov'st the fame of Justice more than act.

*Chor.* How so? Inform me. Skill thou dost not lack! [40

*Athena.* 'Tis not by oaths a cause unjust shall win.<sup>1</sup>

*Chor.* Try then the cause, and righteous judgment judge.

*Athena.* And would ye trust to me to end the cause?<sup>2</sup>

*Chor.* How else? Thy worth and worthy stock we honour.

*Athena.* What dost thou wish, O stranger, to reply?  
Tell thou thy land, thy race, thy life's strange chance,  
And then ward off this censure aimed at thee,  
Since thou sitt'st trusting in thy right, and hold'st  
This mine own image, near mine altar hearth,  
A suppliant, like Ixion,<sup>3</sup> honourable.  
Give thou an answer all may understand. 450

(1.) That they were taken by the parties to the suit, not by witnesses. (2.) That if both parties agreed to that mode of decision, the oath was either way decisive. An allusion to the latter practice is found in Heb. vi. 16, and traces of it are found, as the Yelverton *cause célèbre* has recently reminded us, in the law-proceedings of Scotland.

<sup>1</sup> Æschylos seems here to attach himself to the principles of those who were seeking to reform the practice described in the previous note as being at once cumbrous and unjust, throwing its weight into the scale of the least scrupulous conscience, and to urge a simpler, more straightforward trial. The same objection is noticed by Aristotle in his discussion of the subject. (*Rhet.* i. 15.)

<sup>2</sup> Athena offers herself, not as arbitrator or sovereign judge, but as presiding over the court of jurors whom she proceeds to appoint.

<sup>3</sup> Ixion appeared in the mythical history of Greece as the prototype of all suppliants for purification. When he had murdered Deloneus, Zeus had

*Orest.* O Queen Athena, from thy last words starting,

I first will free thee from a weighty care :

I am not now defiled : no curse abides

Upon the hand that on thy statue rests ;

And I will give thee proof full strong of this.

The law is fixed the murderer should be duno,

Till at the hand of one who frees from blood,

The purple stream from yeanning swine run o'er him ;<sup>1</sup>

Long since at other houses these dread rites<sup>2</sup>

We have gone through, slain victims, flowing streams :

This care, then, I can speak of now as gone.

420

And how my lineage stands thou soon shalt know :

An Argive I, my sire well known to thee,

Chief ruler of the seamen, Agamemnon,

With whom thou madest Troïa, Ilion's city,

To be no city. He, when he came home,

Died without honour ; and my dark-souled mother

Enwrap and slew him with her broidered toils,

Which bore their witness of the murder wrought

had compassion to him, received him as a guest, cleansed him from his guilt. His ingratitude for this service was the special guilt of his attempted outrage upon Hera. The case is mentioned again in v. 687.

<sup>1</sup> In heathen, as in Jewish sacrifices, the blood was the very instrument of purification. It was sprinkled or poured upon men, and they became clean. But this could not be done by the criminal himself nor by any chance person. The service had to be rendered by a friend, who of very love gave himself to this mediatorial work.

<sup>2</sup> In the legend related by Pausanias (*Corinth.* c. 3) Trœzen was the first place where Orestes was thus received, and in his time the descendants of those who had thus helped held periodical feasts in commemoration of it.

There in the bath ; and I, on my return,  
 (Till then an exile.) did my mother kill,  
 (That deed I'll not deny,) in forfeit due  
 Of blood for blood of father best beloved ;  
 And Loxias, too, is found accomplice here,  
 Foretelling woes that pricked my heart to act,  
 If I did nought to those accomplices  
 In that same crime. But thou, judge thou my cause,  
 If what I did were right or wrong, and I,  
 Whate'er the issue, will be well content.

*Athena.* Too great this matter, if a mortal man  
 Think to decide it. Nor is't meet for me  
 To judge a cause of murder stirred by wrath ;  
 \*And all the more since thou with contrite soul  
 Hast come to this my house a suppliant,  
 Harmless and pure. I now, in spite of all,  
 Take thee as one my city need not blame ;<sup>1</sup>  
 But these hold office that forbids dismissal,  
 And should they fail of victory in this cause,  
 Hereafter from their passionate mood will poison <sup>2</sup>  
 Fall on the land, disease intolerable,  
 And lasting for all time. E'en thus it stands ;

<sup>1</sup> The course which Athena takes is : (1,) to receive Orestes as a settler with the rights which attached to such persons on Athenian soil, not a criminal fugitive to be simply surrendered ; (2,) to offer to the Erinnyes, as being too important to be put out of court, a fair and open trial ; (3,) to acknowledge that he and they are equally "blameless," as far as she is concerned. She has no complaint to make of them.

<sup>2</sup> The red blight of vines and wheat was looked on as caused by drops of blood which the Erinnyes had let fall.

And both alike, their staying or their dismissal,  
Are unto me perplexing and disastrous.  
But since the matter thus hath come on me,  
I will appoint as judges of this murder  
Men bound by oath, a law for evermore ;<sup>1</sup>  
And ye, call ye your proofs and witnesses,  
Sworn pledges given to help the cause of right.  
And I, selecting of my citizens  
Those who are best, will come again that they  
May judge this matter truly, taking oaths  
To utter nought against the law of right.

460

[*Exit.*

STROPH. I.

*Chor.* Now will there be an outbreak of new laws :  
If victory shall rest  
Upon the wrong right of this matricide,  
This deed will prompt forthwith  
All mortal men to callous recklessness.  
And many deaths, I trow,  
At children's hands their parents now await  
Through all the time to come.

470

ANTISTROPH. I.

For since no wrath on evil deeds will creep  
Henceforth from those who watch  
With wild, fierce soul the evil deeds of men,  
I will let loose all crime ;

<sup>1</sup> Stress is laid on the fact that the judges of the Areopagos, in contrast with those of the inferior tribunals of Athens, discharged their duty under the sanction of an oath.

\*And each from each shall seek in eager quest,  
 \*Speaking of neighbours' ills,  
 \*For pause and lull of woes ;<sup>1</sup> yet wretched man,  
 He speaks of cures that fail.

## STROPH. II.

Henceforth let none invoke us,  
 When smitten by mischance,  
 Uttering this cry of prayer,  
 " O Justice, and O ye, Erinnyes' thrones !"  
 Such wail, perchance, a father then shall utter,  
 Or mother newly slain,  
 Since, fallen low, the house of Justice now  
 Lies prostrate in the dust.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

There are with whom 'tis well  
 That awe should still abide,  
 As watchman o'er their souls ;  
 Calm wisdom gained by sorrow profits much :  
 For who that in the gladness of his heart,  
 Or man or commonwealth,  
 Has nought of this, would bow at Justice' throne  
 Humbly as heretofore ?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps

" And each from each shall learn, as he predicts  
 His neighbour's ills, that he  
 Shares in the same and harbours them, and speaks,  
 Poor wretch, of cures that fail."

<sup>2</sup> At a more advanced period of human thought, Cicero (*Orat. pro Roscio*, c. 24) could point to the "thoughts that accuse each other," the honour and remorse of the criminal, as the true Erinnyes, the "assidue domesticæque

STROPH. III.

Praise not the lawless life,  
Nor that which owns a despot's sovereignty ;  
To the true mean in all God gives success,<sup>1</sup>  
And looks on other things  
With glance of other mood ;  
And I will say with this in harmony,  
That Pride is truly child of Godlessness ;  
While from the soul's true health  
Comes the fair fortune, loved of all mankind,  
And aim of many a prayer.

500

ANTISTROPH. III.

And now, I say, in sum,  
Revere the altar reared to Justice high,  
Nor, thine eye set on gain, with godless foot  
Treat it contemptuously :  
For penalty shall come,  
The destined end abideth still for each.  
Therefore let each be found full honour giving  
To parents, and to those,  
The honoured guests that gather in his house,  
Let him due reverence show.

510

STROPH. IV.

And one who of his own free will is just,

520

*Furiæ.*" Æschylos clings to the mythical symbolism as indispensable for the preservation of the truth which it shadowed forth.

<sup>1</sup> Once again we have the poet of constitutional conservatism keeping the *via media* between Peisistratos and Pericles.

Not by enforced constraint,  
 He shall not be unblest,  
 Nor can he e'er be utterly o'erthrown ;  
 But he that dareth, and transgresseth all,  
     In wild, confusèd deeds,  
     Where Justice is not seen,  
 I say that he perforce, as time wears on,  
     Will have to take in sail,  
 When trouble makes him hers, and each yard-arm  
     Is shivered by the blast.

## ANTISTROPH. IV.

And then he calls on those who hear him not,  
     And struggles all in vain,  
     In the fierce waves' mid-whirl ;  
 And God still mocks the man with hot thoughts  
     stirred,  
 When he sees him who bragged it ne'er would come,  
     With woes inextricable  
     Worn out, and failing still  
 To weather round the perilous promontory ;  
     And for all time to come,  
 Wrecking his once high bliss on Justice' reefs,  
     He dies unwept, unseen.

[*The scene changes to the Areopagos. Enter ATHENA,  
 followed by Herald and twelve Athenian citizens.*

*Athena.* Cry out, O herald ; the great host hold back ;  
 Then let Tyrrhenian trumpet,<sup>1</sup> piercing heaven,

<sup>1</sup> The Tyrrhenian trumpet, with its bent and twisted tube, retained its

Filled with man's breath, to all that host send forth  
The full-toned notes, (for while this council-hall <sup>540</sup>  
Is filling, it is meet men hold their peace.)

[*Herald blows his trumpet.*

And let the city for all time to come  
Learn these my laws, and this accused one too,  
That so the trial may be rightly judged.<sup>1</sup>

[*As ATHENA speaks, APOLLO enters.*

*Chor.* O King Apollo, rule thou o'er thine own ;  
But what hast thou to do with this our cause ?

*Apol.* I am come both as witness,—for this man  
Is here as suppliant, seated on my hearth,  
And I his cleanser am from guilt of blood,—  
And to plead for him as his advocate :  
I bear the blame of that his mother's death.  
But thou, whoe'er dost act as president,  
Open the suit in way well known to thee.<sup>2</sup> <sup>550</sup>

*Athena.* [*To the Erinnyes.*] 'Tis yours to speak ; I  
thus the pleadings open,  
For so the accuser, speaking first, would have,  
Of right, the task to state the cause at issue.

proverbial pre-eminence from the days of Æschylos and Sophocles, (*Aias*, 17) to those of Virgil, (*Æn.* viii. 526.)

<sup>1</sup> The fondness of the Athenians for litigation, and the large share which every citizen took in the administration of justice, would probably make the scene which follows, with all its technicalities, the part of the play into which they would most enter.

<sup>2</sup> It was necessary that some one, sitting as President of the Court, should formally open the pleadings, by calling on this side or that to begin. Here Athena takes that office on herself, and calls on the Erinnyes.



*Chor.* Many are we, but briefly will we speak ;  
And answer thou, in thy turn, word for word ;  
First tell us this, did'st thou thy mother slay ?

*Orest.* I slew her : of that fact is no denial.

*Chor.* Here, then, is one of our three bouts<sup>1</sup> decided.

*Orest.* Thou boastest this o'er one not yet thrown  
down. 569

*Chor.* This thou at least must tell, how thou did'st  
slay her.

*Orest.* E'en so ; I cut her throat with hand sword-  
armed.

*Chor.* By whom persuaded, and with whose advice ?

*Orest.* [*Pointing to Apollo.*] By His divine command :  
He bears me witness.

*Chor.* The prophet-God prompt thee to matricide !

*Orest.* Yea, and till now I do not blame my lot.

*Chor.* Nay, when found guilty, soon thou'lt change  
thy tone.

*Orest.* I trust : my sire will send help from the  
tomb.

*Chor.* Trust in the dead, thou murderer of thy  
mother !

*Orest.* Yes ; for in her two great pollutions met. 570

<sup>1</sup> The technicalities of the Areopagos are still kept up. The three points on which the Erinnyes, as prosecutors, lay stress are : (1,) the fact of the murder ; (2,) the mode ; (3,) the motive. "Three bouts," as referring to the rule of the arena, that three struggles for the mastery should be decisive.

*Chor.* How so, I pray? Inform the court of this?

*Orest.* She both her husband and my father slew.

*Chor.* Nay then, thou liv'st, and she gets quit by death.

*Orest.* Why, while she lived, did'st thou to chase her fail?

*Chor.* The man she slew was not of one blood with her.<sup>1</sup>

*Orest.* And does my mother's blood then flow in me?

*Chor.* E'en so; how else, O murderer, reared she thee

Within her womb? Disown'st thou mother's blood?

*Orest.* [*Turning to Apollo.*] Now bear thou witness, and declare to me,

Apollo, if I slew her righteously;

580

For I the deed as fact will not deny.

But whether right or wrong this deed of blood

Seem in thine eyes, judge thou that these may hear.

*Apol.* I will to you, Athena's solemn council,

Speak truly, and as prophet will not lie.

Ne'er have I spoken on prophetic throne,

<sup>1</sup> The pleas put in by the Erinnyes as prosecutors are: (1.) That Clytemnestra had been adequately punished by her death, while Orestes was still alive; and (2.) when asked why they had not intervened to bring about that punishment, that the relationship between husband and wife was less close than that between mother and son. They drew, in other words, a distinction between consanguinity and affinity, and upon this the rest of the discussion turns. Orestes, and Apollo as his counsel, on the other hand, meet this with the rejoinder, that there is no blood-relationship between the mother and her offspring.

Of man, or woman, or of commonwealth,  
 But as great Zeus, Olympian Father, bade ;  
 And that ye learn how much this plea avails,  
 I bid you [*Turning to the court of jurymen*] follow out  
 my Father's will ;

No oath can be of greater might than Zeus.<sup>1</sup>

*Chor.* Zeus, then, thou say'st, did prompt the oracle  
 That this Orestes here, his father's blood  
 Avenging, should his mother's rights o'erthrow ?

*Apol.* 'Tis a quite other thing for hero-chief,  
 Bearing the honour of Zeus-given sceptre,  
 To die, and at a woman's hands, not e'en  
 By swift, strong dart, as from Amazon's bow,<sup>2</sup>  
 But as thou, Pallas, now shalt hear, and those  
 Who sit to give their judgment in this cause ;  
 For when he came successful from the trade  
 Of war with largest gains, receiving him  
 With kindly words of praise, she spread a robe  
 Over the bath, yes, even o'er its edge,  
 As he was bathing, and entangling him  
 In endless folds of cloak of cunning work,  
 She strikes her lord down. Thus the tale is told  
 Of her lord's murder, chief whom all did honour,

<sup>1</sup> *Sc.*, Their oath to give a verdict according to the evidence must yield to the higher obligation of following the Divine will rather than the letter of the law.

<sup>2</sup> To have died in health by the arrows of a woman-warrior might have been borne. To be slain by a wife treacherously in his bath was to endure a far worse outrage.

The ships' great captain. So I tell it out,  
E'en as it was, to thrill the people's hearts,  
Who now are set to give their verdict here. [619]

*Chor.* Zeus then a father's death, as thou dost say,  
Of highest moment holds, yet He himself  
Bound fast in chains his aged father, Cronos ;<sup>1</sup>  
Are not thy words at variance with the facts ?  
I call on you [*To the Court*] to witness what he says.

*Apol.* O hateful creatures, loathed of the Gods,  
Those chains may be undone, that wrong be cured,  
And many a means of rescue may be found :  
But when the dust has drunk the blood of men,  
No resurrection comes for one that's dead :  
No charm for these things hath my sire devised ;  
But all things else he turneth up or down, [620]  
And orders without toil or weariness.<sup>2</sup>

*Chor.* Take heed how thou help this man to escape :  
Shall he who stained earth with his mother's blood  
Then dwell in Argos in his father's house ?  
What public altars can he visit now ?  
What lustral rite of clan or tribe admit him ?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this new argument, and the answer to it, we may trace, as in the *Prometheus* and the *Agamemnon*, the struggles of the questioning intellect against the more startling elements of the popular religious belief. Zeus is worshipped as the supreme Lord, yet His dominion seems founded on might as opposed to goodness, on the unrighteous expulsion of another. Here, in Apollo's answer, there is the glimmer of a possible reconciliation. The old and the new, the sovereignty of Cronos and that of Zeus may be reconciled, and one supreme God be "all in all."

<sup>2</sup> Comp. the thought and language of the *Suppliants*, v. 93.

<sup>3</sup> The last argument is, that the acquittal can be, at the best, partial

*Apol.* This too I'll say; judge thou if I speak  
right :

The mother is not parent of the child  
That is called hers, but nurse of embryo sown.  
He that begets is parent : <sup>1</sup> she, as stranger, 639  
For stranger rears the scion, if God mar not ;  
And of this fact I'll give thee proof full sure.  
A father there may be without a mother :  
Here nigh at hand, as witness, is the child  
Of high Olympian Zeus, for she not e'en  
Was nurtured in the darkness of the womb,<sup>2</sup>  
Yet such a scion may no God beget.  
I both in all else, Pallas, as I know,  
Will make thy city and thy people great,  
And now this man have sent as suppliant  
Upon thy hearth, that he may faithful prove 640  
Now and for ever, and that thou, O Goddess,  
May'st gain him as ally, and all his race,  
And that it last as law for evermore,  
That these men's progeny our treaties own.

only, not complete; formal, not real. There would remain for ever the pollution which would exclude Orestes from the *Phratría*, the clan-brotherhood, by which, as by a sacramental bond, all the members were held together.

<sup>1</sup> The question seems to have been one of those which occupied men's minds in their first gropings towards the mysteries of man's physical life, and both popular metaphors and primary impressions were in favour of the hypothesis here maintained. Euripides (*Orest.* v. 534) puts the same argument into the mouth of Orestes.

<sup>2</sup> The story of Athena's birth, full-grown, from the head of Zeus, is next referred to as the leading case bearing on the point at issue.

*Athena.* [*To jurors.*] I bid you give, according to  
your conscience,

A verdict just ; enough has now been said.

*Chor.* We have shot forth our every weapon now :

I wait to hear what way the strife is judged.

*Athena.* [*To Chorus.*] How shall I order this, un-  
blamed by you ?

*Chor.* [*To jurors.*] Ye heard what things ye heard,  
and in your hearts

Reverence your oaths, and give your votes, O  
friends. 650

*Athena.* Hear ye my order, O ye Attic people,  
In act to judge your first great murder-cause.  
And henceforth shall the host of *Ægeus'* race <sup>1</sup>  
For ever own this council-hall of judges :  
And for this *Ares'* hill, the *Amazons'* seat  
And camp when they, enraged with *Theseus*, came <sup>2</sup>  
In hostile march, and built as counterwork

<sup>1</sup> Here, of course, the political interest of the whole drama reached its highest point. What seems comparatively flat to us must, to the thousands who sat as spectators, have been fraught with the most intense excitement, showing itself in shouts of applause, or audible tokens of clamorous dissent. The rivalry of Whigs and Tories over Addison's *Cato*, the sensation produced in times of Papal aggression by the king's answer to *Pandolph* in *King John*, present analogies which are worth remembering.

<sup>2</sup> The story ran that the tribe of women-warriors from the Caucasus, or the *Thermodon*, known by this name, had invaded Attica under *Oreithyia*, when *Theseus* was king, to revenge the wrongs he had done them, and to recover her sister *Hippolyta*. *Ares*, the God of *Thrakians*, *Skythians*, and nearly all the wilder barbaric tribes, was their special deity ; and when they occupied the hill which rose over against the *Acropolis*, they sacrificed to him, and so it gained the name of the *Areopagos*, or "hill of *Ares*."

This citadel high-reared, a city new,  
 And sacrificed to Ares, whence 'tis named  
 As Ares' hill and fortress : in this, I say,  
 The reverent awe its citizens shall own,  
 And fear, awe's kindred, shall restrain from wrong  
 By day, nor less by night, so long as those  
 Who dwell as burghers alter not their laws :  
 But if with stream defiled and tainted soil  
 Clear river thou pollute, no drink thou'lt find.<sup>1</sup>  
 I give my counsel to you, citizens,  
 To reverence and guard well that form of state  
 Which is nor lawless, nor tyrannical,  
 And not to cast all fear from out the city ;<sup>2</sup>  
 For what man lives devoid of fear and just ?  
 But rightly shrinking, owning awe like this,  
 Ye then would have a bulwark of your land,  
 A safeguard for your city, such as none  
 Can boast in Skythia's<sup>3</sup> or in Pelops' clime.

660

670

<sup>1</sup> As in the *Agamemnon*, (v. 1010,) so here we find the aristocratic, conservative poet showing his colours, protesting against the admission to the Archonship, and therefore to the Areopagos, of men of low birth or in undignified employments.

<sup>2</sup> The words, like all political clap-trap, are somewhat vague ; but, as understood at the time, the "lawless" policy alluded to was that of Pericles and Ephialtes, who sought to deface and to diminish the jurisdiction of the Areopagos, and the "tyrannical," that which had crushed the independence of Athens under Peisistratos. Between the two was the conservative party, of which Kimon was the leader.

<sup>3</sup> The Skythians may be named simply as representing all barbarous, non-Hellenic races ; but they appear, about this time, wild and nomadic as their life was, to have impressed the minds of the Greeks somewhat in the same way as the Germans did the minds of the Romans in the time of Tacitus.

Tales floated from travellers' lips of their wisdom and their happiness—of

This council I establish pure from bribe,  
 Reverend, and keen to act, for those that sleep <sup>1</sup>  
 An ever-watchful sentry of the land.  
 This charge of mine I thus have lengthened out  
 For you, my people, for all time to come.  
 And now 'tis meet ye rise, and take your ballots, <sup>2</sup>  
 And so decide the cause, maintaining still  
 Your reverence for your oath. My speech is said. 480

*Chor.* And I advise you not to treat with scorn  
 A troop that can sit heavy on your land.

*Apol.* And I do bid you dread my oracles,  
 And those of Zeus, nor rob them of their fruit.

*Chor.* Uncalled thou com'st to take a murderer's part;  
 No longer pure the oracles thou 'lt speak.

*Apol.* And did my father then in purpose err,  
 When the first murderer he received, Ixion? <sup>3</sup>

*Chor.* Thou talk'st; but should I fail in this my  
 cause,  
 I will again dwell here and vex this land.

sages like Zamolxis and Aristarchos, who rivalled those of Hellas—of the Hyperborei, in the far north, who enjoyed a perpetual and unequalled blessedness.—Comp. *Libation Pourers*, v. 366.

<sup>1</sup> Two topics of praise are briefly touched on: (1,) the lower, popular courts of justice at Athens might be open to the suspicion of corruption, but no breath of slander had ever tainted the fame of the Areopagos; (2,) it met by night, keeping its watch, that the citizens might sleep in peace.

<sup>2</sup> The first of the twelve jurymen rises and drops his voting-ballot into one of the urns, and is followed by another at the end of each of the short two-line speeches in the dialogue that follows. The two urns of acquittal and condemnation stand in front of them. The plan of voting with different coloured balls (black and white) in the same urn, was a later usage.

<sup>3</sup> Compare note on v. 419.



*Apol.* Alike among the new Gods and the old  
Art thou dishonoured : I shall win the day.

*Chor.* This did'st thou also in the house of Pheres,<sup>1</sup>  
Winning the Fates to make a man immortal.

*Apol.* Is it not just a worshipper to bless  
In any case,—then most, when he's in want?

*Chor.* Thou hast o'erthrown, yea, thou, laws hoar  
with age,  
And drugged with wine the ancient Goddesses.<sup>2</sup>

*Apol.* Nay, thou, non-suited in this cause of thine,  
Shalt venom spit that nothing hurts thy foes. 700

*Chor.* Since thou, though young, dost ride me down,  
though old,  
I wait to hear the issue of the cause,  
Still wavering in my wrath against this city.

*Athena.* 'Tis now my task to close proceedings here ;  
And this my vote I to Orestes add ;  
For I no mother own that brought me forth,  
And in all else but wedlock I prefer  
The male with all my heart, and make mine own  
The father's cause, nor will above it place

<sup>1</sup> In the legend of Admetos son of Pheres, and king of Phere in Thessalia, Apollo is represented as having first given wine to the Destinies, and then persuaded them to allow Admetos, whenever the hour of death should come, to be redeemed from Hades, if father, or mother, or wife were willing to die for him. The self-surrender of his wife, Alkestis, for this purpose, forms the subject of the noblest of the tragedies of Euripides.

<sup>2</sup> Partly as setting at nought the power of the Erinyes and the Destinies, partly as giving wine to those whose libations were wineless.—Comp. Sophocles *Œd. Col.* v. 100.

A woman's death, who slew her own true lord,  
The guardian of her house. Orestes wins, 710  
E'en though the votes be equal. Cast ye forth  
With all your speed the lots from out the urns,  
Ye who the juror's office own as yours.

Orest. Phœbos Apollo! what will be the judgment?

Chor. Dark Night, my mother! dost thou look on this?

Orest. My goal is now the noose, or full, clear sunshine.

Chor. Ours too to fail, or carry on our work.

[A pause. The jurors take out the voting tablets from the two urns (one of bronze, the other of wood) for acquittal or condemnation.

Apol. Now count ye up the votes thrown out, O friends,

And be ye honest, as ye reckon them;  
One sentence lacking, sorrow great may come, 720  
And one vote given hath oftentimes saved a house.

[A pause, during which the urns are emptied and the votes are counted.

Athena. The accused is found "not guilty" of the murder:

For lo! the numbers of the votes are equal.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The practice of the Areopagos is accurately reproduced. When the votes of the judges were equal a casting vote was given in favour of the accused, and was known as that of Athena.

*Orest.* O Pallas, thou who hast redeemed my house,  
 Thou, thou hast brought me back when I had been  
 Bereaved of fatherland, and Hellenes now  
 Will say, "This man's an Argive once again,  
 And dwells upon his father's heritage,  
 Because of Pallas and of Loxias,  
 And Zeus, the true third Saviour, all o'erruling.  
 Who, touched with pity for my father's fate, 730  
 Saves me, beholding these my mother's pleaders."  
 And I will now wend homeward giving pledge  
 To this thy country and its valiant host,  
 To stand as firm for henceforth and for ever,  
 That no man henceforth, chief of Argive land,  
 Shall bring against it spearmen well equipped :  
 For we ourselves, though in our sepulchres,  
 On those who shall transgress these oaths of ours,  
 Will with inextricable evils work,  
 Making their paths disheartening, and their ways 741  
 Ill-omened, that they may their toil repent.  
 But if these oaths be kept, to those who honour  
 This city of great Pallas, our ally,  
 Then we to them are more propitious yet.  
 Farewell then, Thou, and these thy citizens !  
 May'st thou so wrestle that thy foes escape not,  
 And so win victory and deliverance !

STROPH.

*Chor.* Ah ! ah ! ye younger Gods !  
 Ye have ridden down the laws of ancient days,

And robbed me of my prey.  
And I, dishonoured, wretched, full of wrath, 740  
    Upon this land, ha ! ha !  
Will venom, venom from my heart let fall,  
    In vengeance for my grief,  
    A dropping which shall smite  
    The earth with barrenness ;  
And thence shall come (O Vengeance !) on the plain  
Down swooping, blight of leaves and murrain dire.  
That o'er the land flings taint of pestilence ; 760  
    Shall I then wail and groan ?  
    Or what else shall I do ?  
Shall I become a woe intolerable  
Unto this state for wrongs I have endured ?  
    Great, very great are they,  
Ye virgin daughters of dim Night, ill-doomed,  
    Born both to shame and woe !  
*Athena.* Nay, list to me, and be not over-grieved  
Ye have not been defeated, but the cause  
Came fairly to a tie, no shame to thee.  
But the clear evidence of Zeus was given,  
And He who spake it bare his witness too  
That, doing this, Orestes should not suffer.  
Hurl ye not then fierce rage on this my land ;  
Nor be ye wroth, nor work ye barrenness,  
\*By letting fall the drops of evil Powers,  
The baleful influence that consumes all seed. 770  
For lo ! I promise, promise faithfully,

That, seated on your hearths with shining thrones,  
 Ye shall find cavern homes in righteous land,  
 Honoured and worshipped by these citizens.

## ANTISTROPH.

*Chor.* Ah! ah! ye younger Gods!  
 Ye have ridden down the laws of ancient days,  
 And robbed me of my prey.  
 And I, dishonoured, wretched, full of wrath,  
 Upon this land, ha! ha!  
 Will venom, venom from my heart let fall,  
 In vengeance for my grief,  
 A dropping which shall smite  
 The earth with barrenness!

780

And thence shall come, (O Vengeance!) on the plain  
 Down-swooping, blight of leaves and murrain dire,  
 That o'er the land flings taint of pestilence.

Shall I then wail and groan?  
 Or what else shall I do?

Shall I become a woe intolerable  
 Unto this state for wrongs I have endured?

Great, very great are they,  
 Ye virgin daughters of dim Night, ill-doomed,  
 Born both to shame and woe!

*Athena.* Ye are not left unhonoured; be not hot  
 In wrath, ye Goddesses, to mar man's land.  
 I too, yes I, trust Zeus. Need I say more?  
 I only of the high Gods know the keys  
 Of chambers where the sealed-up thunder lies;

790

But that I have no need of. List to me,  
Nor cast upon the earth thy rash tongue's fruit,  
That brings to all things failure and distress ;  
Lull thou the bitter storm of that dark surge,  
As dwelling with me, honoured and revered ;  
And thou with first-fruits of this wide champaign,  
Offerings for children's birth and wedlock-rites,  
Shalt praise these words of mine for evermore. 890

*Chor.* That I should suffer this, fie on it ! fie !  
That I, with thoughts of hoar antiquity,  
Should now in this land dwell,  
Dishonoured, deemed a plague !  
I pant with rage, and every form of wrath.  
Pah ! pah ! fie on it ! pah !  
What pang is this that thrills through all my breast ?  
Hear thou, O mother Night,  
Hear thou my vehement wrath !  
For lo ! deceits that none can wrestle with  
Have thrust me out from honours old of Gods,  
And made a thing of nought.

*Athena.* Thy wrath I'll bear, for thou the elder art, 910  
[And wiser too in that respect than I ;]  
Yet to me too Zeus gave no wisdom poor ;  
And ye, if ye an alien country seek,  
Shall faint with love for this land. This I tell you ;  
For to this people Time, as it runs on,  
Shall come with fuller honours, and if thou  
Hast honoured seat hard by Erechtheus' home,

Thou shalt from men and women reap such gifts  
 As thou would'st never gain from other mortals ;  
 But in these fields of mine be slow to cast 829  
 Whetstones of murder's knife, to young hearts bale,  
 Stirring to maddened frenzy, not of wine ;  
 Nor, as transplanting hearts of fighting-cocks,<sup>1</sup>  
 Make Ares inmate with my citizens,  
 In civil discord, with intestine broils ;  
 Let them have war without, not scantily,  
 For him who feels the passionate thirst of fame :  
 Battle of home-bred birds be far from them ;  
 This it is thine to choose as gift from me ;  
 Well-doing, well-entreated, and well-honoured, 830  
 To have thy share in this God-favoured land.

*Chor.* That I should suffer this, fie on it ! fie !  
 That I, with thoughts of hoar antiquity,  
     Should now in this land dwell,  
     Dishonoured, deemed a plague,  
 I pant with every rage, and every form of wrath ;  
     Pah ! pah ! fie on it ! fie !  
 What pang is this that thrills through all my breast ?  
     Hear thou, O mother Night,  
     Hear thou my vehement wrath !  
 For lo ! deceits that none can wrestle with  
 Have thrust me out from honours old of Gods,  
     And made a thing of nought. 840

<sup>1</sup> Cock-fighting took its place among the recognised sports of the Athenians. Once a year there was a public performance in the theatre.

*Athena.* I will not weary, telling thee of good,  
That thou may'st never say that thou, being old,  
Wert at the hands of me, a younger Goddess, .  
And those of men who in my city dwell,  
Driven in dishonour, exiled from this plain.  
But if the might of Suasion thou count holy,  
And my tongue's blandishments have power to soothe,  
Thou then wilt stay ; but if thou wilt not stay,  
Not justly would'st thou bring upon this city,  
Or wrath, or grudge, or mischief for its host.  
It rests with thee, as dweller in this spot,<sup>1</sup>  
To meet with all due honour evermore.

650

*Chor.* Athena, Queen, what seat assign'st thou me ?

*Athena.* One void of touch of evil ; take thou it.

*Chor.* Say I accept. What honour then is mine ?

*Athena.* That no one house apart from thee shall  
prosper.

*Chor.* And wilt thou work that I such might may  
have ?

*Athena.* His lot who worships thee we'll guide aright.

*Chor.* And wilt thou give thy warrant for all time ?

*Athena.* What I work not I might refrain from speak-  
ing.

*Chor.* It seems thou sooth'st me : I relax my wrath.<sup>860</sup>

*Athena.* New friends then thou shalt in this country  
gain.

<sup>1</sup> The Temple of the Eumenides or Semnæ ("venerable ones") stood near the Areopagos.



*Chor.* What hymn then for this land dost bid me raise?

*Athena.* Such as is meet for no ill victory.<sup>1</sup>

And pray that blessings upon men be sent,  
 And that, too, both from earth, and ocean's spray,  
 And out of heaven ; and that the breezy winds,  
 In sunshine blowing, sweep upon the land,  
 And that o'erflowing fruit of field and flock  
 May never fail my citizens to bless,  
 Nor safe deliverance for the seed of men.  
 But for the godless, rather root them out :  
 For I like gardener shepherding his plants,  
 Accept this race of just men freed from ill ;  
 So much for thee ; and I will never fail  
 To give this city honour among men,  
 Victorious in the noble games of war.

870

STROPH. I.

*Chor.* I will accept this offered home with Pallas,  
 Nor will the city scorn,  
 Which e'en All-ruling Zeus  
 And Ares give as fortress of the Gods,  
 The altar-guarding pride of Gods of Hellas ;  
 And I upon her call,  
 With kindly auguries,  
 That so the glorious splendour of the sun  
 May cause life's fairest portion in thick growth  
 \*To burgeon from the earth.

880

<sup>1</sup> Some two or three lines have probably been lost here.

*Athena.* Yes, this I work with kindest feeling  
 For these my subjects, having settled  
 Great Powers and hard to soothe among them :  
 For unto them the lot is given,  
 All things human still to order ;  
 And he who hath not felt pain's pressure  
 Knows not whence life's scourges smite him :  
 For the sin of generations  
 Past and gone ;—a dumb destroyer,—  
 Leads him on into their presence,  
 And with mood of foe low bringeth  
 Him whose lips are speaking proudly.

890

ANTISTROPH. I.

*Chor.* Let no tree-blighting canker breathe on them,  
 (I tell of boon I give,)  
 Nor blaze of scorching heat,  
 That mars the budding eyes of nursling plants,  
 And checks their spreading o'er their narrow bounds ;  
 And may no dark, drear plague  
 Smite it with barrenness.  
 But may Earth feed fair flock in season due,  
 Blest with twin births, and earth's rich produce pay  
 To the high heavenly Powers  
 Its gift for treasure found.<sup>1</sup>

890

*Athena.* Hear ye then, ye city's guardians,  
 What she offers ? Dread and mighty

910

<sup>1</sup> Probably an allusion to the silver-mines at Laureion, which about this time formed a large element of the revenues of Athens.

With the Undying is Erinnyes ;  
 And with Those beneath the earth too,  
 And full clearly and completely  
 Work they all things out for mortals,  
 Giving these the songs of gladness,  
 Those a life bedimmed with weeping.

## STROPH. II.

*Chor.* Avaunt all evil chance  
 That brings men low in death before their time !  
 And for the maidens lovely and beloved,  
     Give, ye whose work it is,  
     Life with a husband true,  
 And ye, O Powers of self-same mother born, 220  
     Ye Fates who rule aright,  
     Partners in every house,  
     Awe-striking through all time,  
 With presence full of righteousness and truth,  
     Throughout the universe  
     Most honoured of the Gods !

*Athena.* Much I joy that thus ye promise  
     These boons to my land in kindness  
     And I love the glance of Suasion,  
     That she guides my speech and accent  
     Unto those who gainsaid stoutly. 230  
     But the victory is won by  
     Zeus, the agora's protector ;  
     And our rivalry in blessings  
     Is the conqueror evermore.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

For this too I will pray,  
That Discord, never satiate with ill,  
May never ravine in this commonwealth,  
Nor dust that drinks dark blood  
From veins of citizens,  
Through eager thirst for vengeance, snatch at woes  
That came as penalties  
For deeds of murderous guilt.  
But may they give instead  
With friendly purpose acts of kind intent,  
And if need be, to hate  
With minds of one accord ;  
For this is healing found to mortal men  
Of many a grievous woe.

*Athena.* Are not they then waxing wiser,  
And at last the path discerning  
Of a speech more good and gentle ?  
Now from these strange forms and fearful,  
See I to my townsmen coming,  
E'en to these, great meed of profit ;  
For if ye, with kindly welcome,  
Honour these as kind protectors,  
Then shall ye be famed as keeping,  
Just and upright in all dealings,  
Land and city evermore.

## STROPH. III.

*Chor.* Rejoice, rejoice ye in abounding wealth,  
 Rejoice, ye citizens,  
 Dwelling near Zeus himself,<sup>1</sup>  
 Loved of the virgin Goddess whom ye love,  
 In due time wise of heart,  
 You, 'neath the wings of Pallas ever staying,<sup>2</sup>  
 The Father honoureth.

*Athena.* Rejoice ye also, but before you  
 I must march to show your chambers,  
 By your escorts' torches holy ;  
 Go, and with those dread oblations  
 Passing to the crypt cavernous,  
 Keep all harm from this our country,  
 Send all gain upon our city,  
 Cause it o'er its foes to triumph.  
 Lead ye on, ye sons of Cranaos,<sup>3</sup>  
 Lead, ye dwellers in the city,  
 Those who come to sojourn with you,  
 And may good gifts work good feeling  
 In its people evermore !

## ANTISTROPH. III.

*Chor.* Rejoice, rejoice once more, ye habitants !  
 I say it yet again,

<sup>1</sup> Reference is made to another local sanctuary, the temple on the Areopagos dedicated to the Olympian Zeus.

<sup>2</sup> The figure of Athena, as identical with Victory, and so the tutelary Goddess of Athens, was sculptured with outspread wings.

<sup>3</sup> Cranaos, the son of Kekrops, the mythical founder of Athens.

Ye Gods, and mortals too,  
Who dwell in Pallas' city. Should ye treat

With reverence us who dwell  
As sojourners among you, ye shall find  
No cause to blame your lot.

*Athena.* I praise these words of yours, the prayers  
ye offer,

And with the light of torches flashing fire,  
Will I escort you to your dark abode,<sup>1</sup>  
Low down beneath the earth, with my attendants,  
Who with due honour guard my statue here,  
For now may issue forth the goodly eye  
Of all the land of Theseus ; fair-famed troop  
Of girls and women, band of matrons too,  
In upper vestments purple-dyed arrayed :  
\*Now then advance ye ; and the blaze of fire,  
Let it go forth, that so this company  
Stand forth propitious henceforth and for aye  
In rearing race of noblest citizens.

980

*Enter an array of women, young and old, in procession,  
leading the Erinnyes,—now, as propitiated, the  
Eumenides or Gentle Ones,—to their shrines.*

STROPH. I.

Go to your home, ye great and jealous Ones,  
Children of Night, and yet no children ye ;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The sanctuaries of the Eumenides were crypt-like chapels, where they were worshipped in gloom by the light of lamps or torches.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps,

“ Children of Night, yourselves all childless left.”

With escort of good will,  
Shout, shout, ye townsmen, shout.

## ANTISTROPH. I.

There in the dark and gloomy caves of earth,  
With worthy gifts and many a sacrifice  
Consumèd in the fire—  
Shout, shout ye, one and all.

290

## STROPH. II.

Come, come, with thought benign,  
Propitious to our land,  
Ye dreaded Ones, yea, come,  
While on your progress onward ye rejoice,  
In the bright light of fire-devourèd torch ;  
Shout, shout ye to our songs.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

Let the drink-offerings come,  
In order meet behind,  
While torches fling their light ;  
\*Zeus the All-seeing thus hath joined in league  
\*With Destiny for Pallas' citizens ;  
Shout, shout ye to our songs.

END OF VOL. I.

---

BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.









UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY  
BERKELEY

Return to desk from which borrowed.  
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

7 Apr '49 DI

27 Apr '49 GE

7 May '49 DB

May 26 '49 ML

13 Apr '51 CC

13 Apr '51 CC

9 Apr '51 LU

26 Jul '51 ED

19 Jul '51 LC

15 Jul '55 RC

JUL 18 1955 LU  
LD 21-100m-9, '48 (B399s16) 476

8 Nov '59 AR

REC'D LD  
JAN 2 1963

NOV 2 1959

27 Sep '61 RC

REC'D LD  
OCT 8 1961

REC'D LD

MAR 9 1962

6 X Jan '62 JE

2100264 ME

REC'D LD  
JAN 13  
JAN 15 '65 - 1 PM

MAR 1 1966 7 6

REC'D LD

APR 13 1966

YB 40997

861067

753  
EP  
1868  
v.1

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

